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**THO: RANDOLPH, D.D. ARCHDEACON of OXFORD,  
President of C.C.C. Margaret Professor of Divinity Oxford.**

*Publish'd as the Act directs, Aug<sup>r</sup>. the 8<sup>th</sup> 1783 by J. K. Sherwin in N<sup>o</sup>. 23 S. James Street.*

A  
V I E W  
O F  
OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR'S  
M I N I S T R Y  
AND THE PROOFS OF HIS  
D I V I N E M I S S I O N  
A R I S I N G F R O M T H E N C E .  
  
T O G E T H E R W I T H  
A C H A R G E ,  
D I S S E R T A T I O N S , S E R M O N S ,  
A N D  
T H E O L O G I C A L L E C T U R E S .

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B Y T H E L A T E T H O M A S R A N D O L P H , D . D .  
A R C H D E A C O N O F O X F O R D , P R E S I D E N T O F C . C . C .  
A N D M A R G A R E T P R O F E S S O R O F D I V I N I T Y  
I N T H E U N I V E R S I T Y O F O X F O R D .

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VOLUME THE FIRST.

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O X F O R D :

P R I N T E D F O R J . A N D J . F L E T C H E R I N T H E T U R L E ;  
A N D M E S S . R I V I N G T O N , S T . P A U L ' S C H U R C H - Y A R D ,  
L O N D O N . M D C C L V I X .

IMPRIMATUR,

S. DENNIS,

Octob. 18. 1783.

Vice-Can. OXON.

# P R E F A C E.

T being necessary to give the Reader some account of the following Work, which miscellaneous, and in great part posthumous, the Editor has judged, that none could be more proper and satisfactory, than that which should also include a short Account of the Author himself and his Writings.

Dr. THOMAS RANDOLPH, late Archdeacon of Oxford, &c, was Son of HERBERT RANDOLPH, Esq. Recorder of the City of Canterbury; the eldest by his second Marriage. He was born Aug. 30, 1701. He received his School Education at the King's School in Canterbury, then in great repute, under the Rev. Mr. JONES. At the early age of fourteen, being then a good proficient in Classical Learning, he was elected into a County Scholarship in Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Thus he entered upon a

Course of Academical Studies under the Tuition of the Rev. Mr. SMITH, in which, as well as in his whole Conduct, he acquitted himself to his own Credit, and to the Satisfaction of those who were set over him; having in view throughout the sacred Profession, to which he had been destined from his early youth. He proceeded regularly through the Degree of B. A. to that of M. A. In the Year 1724 he was ordained Deacon, and in the following Year Priest. At the same Time he entered upon the Duty of his Profession, and undertook a Cure at such a moderate Distance from the University, as that he might discharge the Duties of it, and not be obliged to give up his Residence, and the farther Prosecution of his Studies there. This Course of Life he continued for a few Years, and then returned to a more strict residence at the University; nor was he intent on his own Improvement only, but occasionally took Part in the Education of others, and in the Government of his College, in which he succeeded

succeeded to a Fellowship in the Year 1723. He took the Degree of B. D. in the Year 1730, and that of D. D. in 1735. In the mean Time he began to be distinguished in the University as an able Divine. His Character in this respect introduced him to the Notice of Archbishop POTTER, then Bishop of Oxford, and Regius Professor of Divinity: Who soon after his own Tranflation to Canterbury, collated him to the united Vicarages of Petham and Waltham in Kent. The Archbishop shortly after recommended him to Dr. RYE, Regius Professor of Divinity, as a fit Person to act as his Deputy; who appointed him accordingly. This Appointment will appear the more honourable, if we remind the Reader, that the Divinity Disputations were at that Time in great repute, and were esteemed a Trial of the Skill and Learning of the Senior Part of the University. It was also hoped, that by Means of a Reputation acquired in the Divinity Chair, whilst acting as Deputy, his Friends might be enabled to hold him

forth to the World, as a proper Candidate for the Professorship itself when it should become vacant: Nor when that occasion happened did they fail to urge his Pretensions; but in this Instance a more powerful Competitor prevailed. He retired therefore to his Living of Petham in Kent.

This Period was remarkable for several very bold and artful Attacks upon the Christian Religion, which drew forth many able Answers from the Divines of the Church of England. Amongst other Books published in favour of Deism and Infidelity was a Work entitled "*Christianity not founded on Argument,*" which from the Singularity of its Positions attracted much Notice. Dr. RANDOLPH was encouraged by his Patron ARCHBISHOP POTTER to try his Strength in Controversy in Answer to this singular and plausible Writer. The Archbishop was convinced from his knowledge of him at the University, and the Abilities which he had since displayed there in the Divinity Chair,  
that

that he had Talents which thus employed might become serviceable to the Cause of Religion. Nor was he disappointed. Dr. RANDOLPH's Answer entitled “*The Christian's Faith a rational Assent*” met with the Reception which he expected. The Archbishop still continued his Patronage to him, and in the Year 1746 collated him to the Rectory of Saltwood, with the Chapel of Hythe annexed. The Place of his Residence was still the same: He continued at Petham in the faithful discharge of his Duty to his Parish till he was suddenly called forth in the Year 1748, on the Death of Dr. MATHER, President of C. C. C. to a more honourable and conspicuous Station, having been unanimously elected in his Absence, and without any previous Communication with the Electors, to the Government of his old College. This Circumstance enabled him to devote the remainder of his Life to the Place of his Education, and the Scene of his growing Reputation. Oxford became from hence the principal Place of his

Residence; and the Government of his College, and a Share in that of the University, his chief Employment and Concern. Yet having naturally an active Mind, and being ever vigilant and attentive to all the Duties of his Station, much of his Time was still devoted to Religious Studies, which he considered as included in the proper Duties of his Station, and as their highest Aim. Many of his Sermons preached before the University were printed by Request, and his larger Work upon "*The Doctrine of the Trinity*", in answer to "*The Essay on Spirit*," was published in the Years 1753, 1754. From the Year 1756 to 1759 he held the Office of Vice-Chancellor, in which he was allowed on all Hands to have conducted himself with Temper and Ability, at a Time when Disputes ran high, and the Business of the University was more than common; the Vinerian Statutes having been settled, and the Delegacy of the Press reformed during that Period. These several Labours were so well received by the University, that in  
the

the Year 1768 he was unanimously elected to the Margaret Professorship of Divinity on the Death of Dr. JENNER. In the preceding Year he had been promoted to the Archdeaconry of Oxford on the Resignation of Dr. POTTER: Which Promotion took Place by the Recommendation of Archbishop SECKER, accepted and confirmed by Bishop LOWTH, then Bishop of Oxford; and may be considered as a Testimony borne by those respectable Prelates to his Merit and Character. From this Time to that of his Death he was again frequently engaged in Controversy. The Questions now agitated were chiefly, that of Subscription to Articles of Faith, and that of the Doctrine of the Trinity revived by Mr. LINDSEY, and his Followers. On these he published several Tracts, and also occasionally gave his Assistance to others engaged in the same Cause. Bodily Infirmities he was subject to for many Years before his Death; the Faculties of his Mind were found and unimpaired to the very last.

Within

Within the last Year of his Life he finished and published a Work, which he had prepared some Time before, on the Citations from the Old Testament in the New. Repeated Attacks at length brought him to a State of Weakness that was quite desperate, under which he laboured for three Months, and died March 24, 1783.

The Reader will perceive from the above Account, that his whole Attention was confined to his Profession, and his Station in the University. Being convinced that the Province allotted to him, if its Duties were faithfully discharged, was sufficient for his own Employment, and for the rendering him an useful Member of Society, he was not disposed to wander beyond it. He was a zealous Supporter of the Doctrines of the Church of England, from a Conviction that they were those of the true Religion of Christ. It has sometimes been invidiously urged by the Enemies of our Religious Establishment, who with great Professions of Liberality are by no Means

Means scrupulous of the Terms in which they speak of the Doctrines, Discipline, or Members of our Church, that its Supporters act from interested Views. In answer to this Charge thrown out against himself in common with others, Dr. R. says in a Preface to an intended Work, “ One of these Writers is now near fourscore Years of Age, “ who neither hopes for, nor will solicit for “ any Thing farther in this World : He “ fights under no Banner, but that of his “ Lord and Saviour, from whom alone he “ expects his Reward.” Conscious of having acted thus from a sense of Duty, he bore his long Illness with Patience, and met the near Approach of Death with Calmness and Fortitude ; as trusting that he had fulfilled the Part of a faithful Minister of Christ’s Gospel, and prepared to give the last and solemn Account of his Ministry, before that Almighty Judge who seeth the very Hearts of Men.

In the following Publication, the Work  
which

which stands first, entitled, “*A View of our Blessed Saviour’s Ministry*”, &c. was drawn up long ago, but received several occasional Additions and Alterations, and was left ready for the Press. The Reader will easily perceive, that it was occasioned by a former Controversy in which the Author was engaged; being a Defence of the Gospel History from a View and Explanation of the whole Conduct of our Saviour, against an Objection urged in “*Christianity not founded on Argument*”. He had shortly and sufficiently answered that Objection in his former Work, but seems to have thought the Answer would be more full, from taking in the whole of our Saviour’s Conduct, and would thus form an useful continued Comment upon the Gospel History. The Appendix was printed in the Form of two Sermons in Answer to Mr. GIBBON, in order to shew, that the first and greatest Miracle in the Propagation of the Christian Religion had obtained, before the Causes assigned by him could begin to operate.

operate. It is now reduced to its original Form, and therefore those two Sermons are not reprinted with the rest, being almost verbatim the same with this Appendix. Annexed to the first Volume are, the Charge printed in 1771, and two Sermons not before printed reduced to the Form of Critical Dissertations. The Second Volume contains all the Sermons which the Author himself published (those above-mentioned excepted) together with the Dissertations originally annexed to them; and besides these a Series of Latin Lectures read by Dr. R. as Margaret Professor of Divinity. The Twelve first are a continued Argument on the Divinity of our Saviour, from a Comparison of several Passages in the Old and New Testament. The Reader will find that two of them are nearly the same with the Sermon on “*Christ the Lord of Glory*”, and it may therefore seem that they might have been omitted; but as the Force of the Argument in these Lectures depends on the united Strength and Coherence

herence of the Whole, it was thought proper rather to repeat this particular Part, than to separate it from its proper Place. The Subjects of the other Lectures appear from their Titles.

The following is a complete List of  
Dr. RANDOLPH's Publications.

- \* The Advantages of Publick Education, a Sermon, published A. D. 1733.
- \* An Enquiry into the Sufficiency of Reason in Matters of Religion, a Sermon, published A. D. 1738.
- The Christian's Faith a rational Assent, in 2 Parts, 8vo, published A. D. 1744-45.
- \* Party-Zeal censured, a Sermon, published A. D. 1752.
- Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, in 3 Parts, with an Appendix, 8vo. A. D. 1753—1754.
- \* The Certainty of a Future State, &c. a Sermon, published A. D. 1755.
- \* Christ the Lord of Glory, a Sermon, published A. D. 1759.
- \* The Use of Reason in Matters of Religion, a Sermon, published A. D. 1762.
- \* Jephthah's Vow, a Sermon, published A. D. 1766.
- \* The Witness of the Spirit, a Sermon, published A. D. 1768.
- \* The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, a Sermon, published A. D. 1768.
- \* The Reasonableness of requiring Subscription to Articles of Religion, &c. a Charge, published A. D. 1771.

\* The

- \* The Excellency of the Jewish Law, with an Appendix, &c.  
2 Sermons, published A. D. 1773.
  - An Answer to a Pamphlet, entitled, Reflections on the Impropriety of Lay-Subscription to the XXXIX Articles in the University of Oxford, published A. D. 1773.
  - An Answer to a Pamphlet, entitled, Considerations on the Propriety of requiring Subscription to Articles of Faith, published A. D. 1774.
  - A Vindication of the Worship of the Son and the Holy Ghost, against the Exceptions of Mr. Lindsey, published A. D. 1775.
  - A Letter to the Remarker on the Layman's Scriptural Confutation, &c. published A. D. 1777.
  - \* The Proof of the Christian Religion drawn from its successful and speedy Propagation, &c. 2 Sermons, published A. D. 1777.
  - The Prophecies and other Texts cited in the N. T. compared with the Hebrew Original, and with the Septuagint Version, 4to. published A. D. 1782.
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- A View of our Blessed Saviour's Ministry, and the Proofs of his Divine Mission arising from thence.  
 Dissertation on Psalm XXII.  
 ——— on Psalm XLII.  
 Prælectiones Theologicæ XVII.

Those marked \* are included in the present Publication.  
 Those underneath the Line were not before published.

C O N T E N T S  
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V O L. I.

A View of our Blessed Saviour's Ministry and  
the Proofs of his Divine Mission arising  
from thence.

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A V I E W

# P R E F A C E.

**A**S this View of our Blessed Saviour's Ministry is taken from his History recorded by the four Evangelists, it may not be improper to premise somewhat by way of Enquiry into the Authority and Validity of their Testimony. And here in the First Place it is certain that these Gospels have been always received as the Works of those Authors whose Names they bear.<sup>a</sup> They are quoted as such by the most ancient Christian Writers, are appealed to as of undoubted Authority, and were read in the publick Assemblies of Christians in the first Ages. It is certain that two of these Evangelists, St. Matthew and St. John, were of the number of the Twelve Apostles, and were constant Attendants on our Lord during the greatest Part of his Ministry: St. John indeed himself assures us that he was an Eye-Witness to what he has recorded,<sup>b</sup> *That which we have seen, and heard, declare we unto you.* But as to St. Mark, and St. Luke, the Case is not so clear.<sup>c</sup> Epiphanius, and <sup>d</sup> Origen, or, whoever is the Author of the Dialogue against the Marcionites

<sup>a</sup> See these Testimonies collected at large by Mr. Lardner in his Supplm. to Cred. of Gosp. Hist. <sup>b</sup> 1 Joh. i. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Hær. 51. §. 6. and 11. <sup>d</sup> P. 8.

ascribed to him, tell us that they were both of them of the number of the *seventy Disciples*. Others suppose them not to have been themselves Attendants on our *Lord*, but to have received what they wrote from those who were Eye-witnesses of his Actions. And though the Generality perhaps of Writers are willing to allow that St. *Mark* was one of our *Lord's Disciples*, yet they think it appears from the Beginning of St. *Luke's Gospel* that he was no *Eye-witness* of what he has recorded: And so indeed the Words, as they stand in our Translation, seem to import. But this Interpretation seems to be attended with insuperable Difficulties: If so many had set forth *Declarations of these things*, and that even as they received them from *Eye-Witnesses*, what Occasion had St. *Luke* to set forth a new *Declaration*? The Reason here given, why it seemed good to him to write this *Gospel*, seems rather to prove the contrary, that he had no Occasion to write it. Again, what farther *Certainty* could he impart to *Theophilus*, or other *Christians*, than those who had written before him? If these many were only Hear-say Witnesses, St. *Luke* himself, according to this Interpretation of his Words, was no better. We believe indeed that St. *Luke* was inspired by the *Holy Spirit of God*; but, if this was the only thing, which gave him a Pre-eminence above other inferior Relators of *Gospel-History*, how comes he not to set this forth? If this had been

been the Case, one would think it would have been proper to have used some such Preface, as St. Paul does in his Epistle to the *Galatians*—<sup>c</sup> *I certify you, Brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached by me, is not after Man. For I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.*—But St. Luke only tells us that he *had perfect Understanding of all things from the very first*: and so perhaps some other of those many Writers might say.

Another Question, which here naturally arises, is, how so improper a Person as St. *Luke* according to this Supposition seems to be, was induced, or employed, to write this *Gospel*. There were twelve *Apostles*, and several others, who had attended our *Lord* during his Ministry, and been *Eye-witnesses* to the greatest Part of his Transactions. How then came one to be chosen to record those Transactions, who was only an *Hear-say* Evidence, nay, <sup>f</sup> according to some, was not converted to the *Christian* Faith, till some Years after our *Lord's Ascension*? I am sensible indeed that *God* may employ what Instruments he pleases, and that it little becomes us to prescribe to the divine Wisdom. But we may be allowed, with humble Submission, to say that on Grounds of common Probability, it seems to us unlikely that, when there were so many

<sup>c</sup> Gal. i. 11, 12.

<sup>f</sup> See *Cave's Life of St. Luke*.

*Eye-witnesses of the Word,* God should commission one to record our *Lord's Transactions*, who received his Knowledge of them only from the Report of others: And this especially, as his Testimony is not confirmed by any particular divine Attestation. This also we are the more emboldened to say, & because we find that in the Election of an *Apostle* who was to bear *Witness of our Lord's Resurrection*, the Choice was confined to those, who had attended him from the *Baptism of John unto that same Day that he was taken up into Heaven*. If this Qualification was necessary in an *Apostle*, who was to be a *Witness of our Lord's Resurrection*, it should seem still more necessary in an *Evangelist*, who was to set forth a *Declaration* of all his Transactions. To this may be added that St. *Luke* in his *Acts of the Apostles*, seems to confine himself to such Transactions as he had personal Knowledge of: He relates what passed at *Jerusalem*, where, if he was one of *our Lord's seventy Disciples*, we may suppose that he himself resided: And afterwards, passing by the Actions, and Preachings, of the other *Apostles*, he confines his Narration to the Travels of St. *Paul*, whose Attendant he was, and to most of whose Transactions we may reasonably suppose him to have been an *Eye-witness*. We may therefore with great Probability conclude that he took the same

\* *Acts i. 21, 22.*  
z *Tim. iv. 11.*

\* *Acts xx. 5, &c. Col. iv. 14.*

Method in his *Gospel*, and relates only, or chiefly, such Facts as he had personal Knowledge of. These Reasons incline me strongly to doubt of the common interpretation of this Passage, and to enquire whether the Words will not bear another Sense more free from Difficulties. <sup>1</sup> And this I think they will do, only by a slight Variation in the Punctuation; by placing a Colon, instead of a Comma, at the End of the first Verse; and then, instead of joining together the first and second Verses, connecting the third Verse with the second. The Gospel was at first preached by the *Apostles*, and our *Lord's* Miracles and Doctrine, delivered by Word of Mouth. But as Oral Tradition is an uncertain Method of Conveyance, it was thought expedient that a short Account of our *Lord's* Transactions should be committed to Writing. This was soon after the first preaching of the *Gospel* done by St. *Mattbew* for the Use of the *Jews* at *Jerusalem*. And afterwards, when the Word was preached among the *Gentiles*, St. *Mark*, as I suppose, compiled another *Gospel* for their Use. But, as by the preaching of St. *Paul* the *Christian*

<sup>1</sup> The learned *Lud. Cappellus* supposes an Hyperbaton in this Passage, and that the third Verse is to be construed before the second. And Dr. *Whitby* asserts, and has brought probable Proof, that St. *Luke* was one of the *seventy Disciples*. See also *Lightfoot* *Heb. et Talmud. Exerc. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. Petav. Animadv. in Epiphan. Hær. 51.*

Religion was still farther propagated, and as, before the Art of Printing was known, Copies of Books were not easily multiplied, few, if any, Copies of these Gospels might have reached those Parts, where St. Luke then was; and therefore others might take in Hand to set forth Declarations of the Gospel Facts. These I suppose St. Luke here refers to in his first Verse; and he seems to speak of them in rather disparaging Terms.—*Forasmuch as many—*~~τόνδιαι~~*—in Opposition to those few Eye-witnesses, who had delivered these things from their own personal Knowledge—*~~επιχείρησαν~~*—had attempted only to set forth a Declaration of these things :* These Writers might possibly attempt this with a good Intention; but their Histories could neither be accurate, nor authentick: And therefore St. Luke thought it proper to write one, which should be both accurate, and authentick. Accordingly he adds—*καθὼς παρέδοντο ἡμῖν οἱ απὸ ἀρχῆς εὐτόπται—As those who were from the Beginning Eye-witnesses, and Ministers of the Word, delivered to us these things—*~~εἰδὼς καὶ ποιῶν~~*—The Word* ~~καὶ ποιῶν~~ *plainly refers to, and connects what follows with, what went immediately before.* \* These Eye-witnesses, I suppose, might be

\* Some Writers suppose St. Luke to have written his *Gospel* before St. *Mark*; but the general Opinion, and what seems most probable, is that St. *Mark* wrote first. The Word *παρέδοντο* may signify oral, as well as written *Tradition*; and the Sense may be, without any particular Reference to St. *Matthew*, or St. *Mark*, that as the Apostles, and other Attendants of our *Saviour*,

the former Evangelists St. Matthew, and St. Mark. As these had delivered the Facts of the Gospel—*εἴδος καίμοι* (says St. Luke) περικολεθηότι ἀνωδειν τῶν αἰνεῖσ—*it seemed good to me also*, who was like them an Eye-witness, and who attended all these things punctually from the very first, to write unto thee in Order. I am sensible that the Word περικολεθεῖν may, and often does bear an inferior Signification—to trace out things by Enquiry: <sup>1</sup> But the Sense here given is the primary, and most natural Signification of the Word. <sup>m</sup> And it is observable that Josephus makes the same Apology for the Truth of his History, as St. Luke does here for his *Gospel*. He sets forth himself as worthy of Credit—περικολεθηότα τοῖς γεγονόσιν—which he afterwards expresses thus—*ποιλῶν μὲν αὐτοργὸς περάζεων, πλειστὸν δὲ αὐτόπτης γεγόμενος*—And the Word is by him opposed to Knowledge acquired by Enquiry of others—<sup>n</sup> παρὰ τὴν εἰδότων παυδαρόμενον—So also in this Passage of St. Luke the Word taken in this Sense answers to the αὐτόπται ὡς ὑπηρέται τῆς λόγου—*Eye-witnesses and Ministers of the Word*—in the former Verse. It makes the Sense

Saviour, had delivered down an Account of his Miracles, and Doctrine, from their own personal Knowledge, so St. Luke also, who had been a constant Attendant on him, thought fit to do the same.

<sup>1</sup> In this Sense it seems to be used in all the Places where it occurs in Scripture. See Mar. xvi. 17.—1 Tim. iv. 6.—2 Tim. iii. 10. <sup>m</sup> Joseph. contr. Appion. L. i. §. 10.

more easy ; it gives us a Reason, and Account, why it seemed good to St. Luke to write this Gospel ; and how thereby Theophilus, and other Christians, might know the Certainty of those things wherein they had been instructed. It also corresponds to the Qualifications required of an Apostle in the first Chapter of the *Act*s.—Παρηκολεθητά ἦν δέ πᾶσιν αἰχελῶς—having attended all things punctually from the very first—is the same as—<sup>n</sup> having companied with the Apostles all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them ; and this, as I said before, seems to be as necessary a Qualification for an Evangelist, as for an Apostle. The Sense therefore of this Passage of St. Luke I take to be this—Since many inaccurate and unauthorised Accounts of our Lord's Ministry have been handed about, I, after the Example of other Eye-witnesses, having been myself an Attendant on our Lord from the Beginning, have thought good to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the Certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed. But I would not be too positive, or peremptory, in what is here advanced. None of the Evangelists were Eye-witnesses of every thing which they relate. The Circumstances of our Saviour's Birth, Circumcision, Baptism, &c. they learnt, I presume, from the Testimony of others. But they were, at least two of them, Attendants on

<sup>n</sup> *Act*s i. 21.

our *Lord* during the greatest part of his Ministry, and were *Eye-witnesses* of most of the Facts which they relate, of many, or most of his Miracles, and of his Resurrection. And so I suppose St. *Luke* here affirms himself to have been. I will not indeed go so far as to say that this Passage will not admit of any other Interpretation; but I humbly apprehend that this is a Sense, which the Words will very well bear, and is free from those Difficulties, and Objections, which attend the most generally received Sense of them. And if this Interpretation is admitted, it will hence appear that St. *Luke* was, as the other *Evangelists* were, an *Eye-witness* of the Transactions which he records; probably one of the *seventy Disciples*<sup>o</sup>, whom our *Lord* sent out. And accordingly it is remarkable that he alone of all the *Evangelists* has recorded this Transaction of our *Lord*. It has been before observed that St. *John* insists strongly on this Circumstance that he was an *Eye-witness* to what he testifies—  
<sup>p</sup> Many other Signs truly did Jesus in the Presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.—<sup>q</sup> This is the Disciple, which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things. The like he declares in his Epistle

<sup>o</sup> Luke x. 1, &c.

<sup>p</sup> Joh. xx. 30, 31.—<sup>q</sup> xxi. 24.

—<sup>r</sup> That

—*That which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you.*—And St. Luke also, as he ministered to St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, might think it necessary to assure them of the Certainty of those things which he related, by letting them know that he was a constant Attendant on our Saviour.

We have therefore full and sufficient Assurance of the Truth of what is recorded in the Gospels: We have the concurrent Testimony of four *Eye-witnesses*, who all agree in the principal Facts of the Gospel-History: Some Facts indeed are related by one, which are omitted by another; and the same Facts are related with different Circumstances: But in the principal Facts they all agree. They are such Witnesses, as could not be deceived themselves in the Facts which they relate; and they could have no Temptation, or Motive, to deceive others. They relate plain Facts, *which they saw with their Eyes, and heard with their Ears*, and which were confirmed by the united Testimony of all their Senses. They were plain and honest Men; and some of them laid down their Lives in Testimony of the Facts which they related. They could have no Inducement whatever to falsify. The number also of these Witnesses makes it still more improbable that they should be either imposed on themselves, or should combine to deceive others. We have

\* 1 Joh. i. 1, &c.

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here, as I said, four concurrent *Eye-witnesses*; and they not only tell us that they were constant Attendants on our *Lord*, but that many of his Miracles were wrought before all his *Apostles*, and that after his Resurrection he appeared to them all, and to many others. So that this Testimony, published with their Consent, and Name, ought to be looked on as the united Testimony of them all. And this Argument would hold good, though these Historians had not been all *Eye-witnesses*: Whether my Interpretation of this Passage be allowed, or not; whether we have four, or only two, *Eye-witnesses* of our *Lord's Transactions*, we shall still have sufficient *Certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed*. And, if we were to suppose this to be no more than human Testimony, if we were to allow these *Evangelists* to have written their *Gospels* unassisted by divine Inspiration, yet this would afford us full, and abundant, Proof of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*. We have here sufficient Evidence of our *Lord's Resurrection*, and of the many, and wonderful, Miracles, which he wrought; and from thence we may with Certainty infer his divine Mission, and the Truth of the Doctrines which he taught. And this I take to be the Reason why the *Evangelists* none of them particularly insist on their divine Inspiration. They *wrote their Gospels* to prove that *Jesus was the Christ the Son of God*. This was to be proved by the *Signs*,

which

which he truly did in the Presence of his Disciples; and that he truly did them was to be proved by the Testimony of those Disciples. If therefore the Evangelists had set forth that they learned the Truth of those Facts by divine Inspiration, they would have found but little Credit with Unbelievers, especially among the Gentiles, who would have questioned the Truth of such Inspiration, and would not have believed it merely on their Assveration of it. And therefore, waving that Plea, they chose rather to insist that what *they declared*, was *what they had seen with their Eyes*, and learnt from a personal Attendance on Christ. This was the first and principal thing to be insisted on for the Conviction of Unbelievers.

How then do we know, or why do we believe, that these *Gospels* were written by divine Inspiration? and how are we assured of the infallible Certainty of all the Facts, and Doctrines delivered by them? First then, \* we are assured by St. Paul that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*. By Scripture here is meant at least the Writings of the *Old Testament*, which are always in the *New Testament* called *the Scripture, or Scriptures*. These the Jews looked upon as *the Word of God*, <sup>1</sup> and *in these they thought they had eternal Life*. <sup>2</sup> It is in many Places of the *New Testa-*

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16.      <sup>1</sup> Joh. v. 39.      <sup>2</sup> Mar. xii. 36.  
Acts i. 16. iii. 18. 21. iv. 25. xxviii. 25. Heb. iii. 7. ix. 8.  
2 Pet. i. 20. Luk. i. 70.

ment asserted that the *Holy Ghost* spake by the Pen-men of the *Old Testament*. \* St. Paul calls these Writings *the Holy Scriptures*; and in the Passage just cited he teaches us that *these Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto Salvation*, and that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*. But some Commentators have thought fit to join the Word *διαπνευστος* with *γραφη*, and to render the Text thus—*All inspired Scripture is also profitable for Doctrine, &c*—But this little, if at all, alters the Sense. If the words thus rendered do not expressly assert that *all Scripture was given by Inspiration*, yet they plainly imply that the *Jews* had a *Scripture given by Inspiration*; and this could be no other than *the Books of the Old Testament* then received among them: In these *Timothy* had been instructed, and *these he had known from a Child*: These therefore we are here taught were *given by Inspiration of God*. And I don't know whether we may not extend the Meaning of the word *Scripture* here still farther. For, when this second Epistle to *Timothy* was written, great Part of the *New Testament* had been written, and particularly all the *Gospels* excepting that of *St. John*. And therefore we may reasonably suppose that *St. Paul*, speaking of *all Scripture*, includes the Writings of the *New Testament*, as well as those of the *Old*, and asserts equally of both that they were *given by Inspiration*.

\* Rom. i. 2. 2 Tim. iii. 15. &c.

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tion. But, if St. Paul's Assertion be thought to extend no farther than the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*, yet surely we may with Parity of Reason conclude, that, if God thought it necessary to *inspire* the Pen-men of the *Old Testament*, he would certainly afford his *Apostles* the same Assistance under the *Gospel*. And accordingly St. Peter ranks them both together, and ascribes the same Authority to both. \* He exhorts his Disciples to be *mindful* of the *Words* which were spoken before by the *holy prophets*, and of the *Commandments* of us (says he) the *Apostles* of our *Lord* and *Saviour*; <sup>y</sup> and he tells them, that *they that are unlearned wrested St. Paul's Epistles, as they did also the other Scriptures, to their own Destruction*. The *Apostles* were most of them *unlearned and ignorant men*: <sup>x</sup> They understood not our *Lord's Doctrines*: They were *slow of Heart*, and dull of *Apprehension*: <sup>a</sup> And therefore our *Lord* promised them that, when he left them, he would send them the *Holy Ghost*, who should teach them all *things*, and bring all *things* to their *Remembrance*, whatsoever he had said unto them. <sup>b</sup> He also assured them that, when they were brought before *Governors, and Kings, for his sake*, it should be given them in that same Hour what they should speak. For it is not (saith our

\* 2 Pet. iii. 2.

y iii. 16.

x Matt. xv. 16.

Mar. ix. 32. Luk. ix. 45. xviii. 34. xxiv. 25. <sup>a</sup> Joh. xiv. 26. <sup>b</sup> Matt. x. 18. &c.

*Lord) ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you.* Nor could the *Apostles* have successfully executed their Commission without such extraordinary Assistance: Nor could we have sufficient Security that our *Saviour's* Doctrines were faithfully, and truly, delivered by the *Evangelists*, if we were not assured that they were under the Guidance of the *Holy Spirit*. If these things had been entrusted to the Memory of frail Man, they might not have been delivered down to us free from Error, or Mistake. And accordingly the *Promise of the Spirit to the Apostles* was most wonderfully fulfilled: *On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descended upon them; and they spake with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* And these *Apostles*, who were before so slow of Understanding, and who, when our *Lord* was apprehended, *all forsook him, and fled*, <sup>c</sup> now being filled with the *Holy Ghost*, preached the *Word* with all Boldness, and <sup>d</sup> spake with a *Wisdom, and Spirit, which none of their Adversaries were able to gainsay, or resist.* And under the constant Guidance of the *Spirit* the *Apostles* proceeded to preach the *Gospel* every where. <sup>e</sup> By him they were enabled to work *Signs and Wonders*; <sup>f</sup> by him they were directed in the Ordination of *Ministers*; <sup>g</sup> by him they were guided in their Jour-

<sup>c</sup> Acts iv. 31.    <sup>d</sup> vi. 10. Luk. xxi. 15.    <sup>e</sup> Acts xiv. 3.  
<sup>f</sup> xiii. 2.                <sup>g</sup> xvi. 6, &c,

nies,

nies, and instructed where to preach the Gospel. Nor were these Gifts peculiar only to the Apostles.  
<sup>b</sup> We read of *Wonders and Miracles* wrought by many others. <sup>i</sup> We are told that *the Holy Ghost* often fell on those that heard the *Word*, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied. <sup>k</sup> St. Paul, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, speaking of the extraordinary *Gifts* conferred by *Christ* on his Church, says—*He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers.* Where, <sup>j</sup> though by *Evangelists* I suppose are principally meant those who assisted the *Apostles* in *preaching the Gospel*, yet surely those who committed the *Gospel* to Writing are not excluded. And if *God* gave the Assistance of his *Spirit* to the former, we may certainly conclude that the same *Spirit* guided the latter.

We also find the *Apostles* frequently laying Claim to this particular Gift of *Inspiration*. They declare that the Doctrines which they delivered, were not *the Word of Man*, but *the Word of God* himself: <sup>m</sup> St. Paul thus addresses the *Galatians*—*I certify you, Brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, was not after Man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.*—<sup>n</sup> In like manner

<sup>b</sup> Acts vi. 8. viii. 6, &c. <sup>i</sup> Cor. xii. & xiv. <sup>j</sup> Acts viii. 17. x. 44. xix. 6. <sup>k</sup> Eph. iv. 11. <sup>l</sup> See Hammond, Grotii Annot.—St. Luke was an *Evangelist* in both Senses of the Word. <sup>m</sup> Gal. i. 11, 12. <sup>n</sup> Eph. iii. 3, &c.

in his Epistle to the *Ephesians* he declares, that by *Revelation* was made known to him the *Mystery of Christ*; and that the *Calling of the Gentiles* was revealed unto God's holy *Apostles*, and *Prophets*, by the *Spirit*. ° Again he thus bespeaks the *Corinthians* —*God hath revealed them* (that is, the *Mysteries of the Gospel*) *unto us by his Spirit*: *For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God*. *For what Man knoweth the things of a Man, save the Spirit of a Man, which is in him?* even so the things of God knoweth no Man, but the *Spirit of God*. Now we have received, not the *Spirit of the World*, but the *Spirit which is of God*; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the *Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth*, but which the *Holy Ghost teacheth*. In the seventh Chapter of this Epistle, he distinguishes between Matters of Indifference, wherein he had given his *Judgment*, or acted by human Authority, and those Articles of Faith, or Practice, which he had delivered to them by the *Commandment of God*. With regard to the former he says— ♪ *I speak this by Permission, and not of Commandment*.—With regard to the latter — ♫ *I command, yet not I, but the Lord*—And he thus concludes this Chapter— ♭ *And I think also that I*

° 1 Cor. ii. 10, &c. ♪ vii. 6. ♫ vii. 10. ♭ vii. 40.  
The Word in the Original δοξω often signifies not only a bare Opinion, but a full Persuasion.

have the Spirit of God. \* In the fourteenth Chapter of this Epistle, we find that several in the Church of *Corinth* were then endowed, not only with the *Gift of speaking in an unknown Tongue*, but with the *Gift of prophesying*, or speaking by divine *Revelation, to the Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort of the Church*, and to the Astonishment, and *Conviction of Unbelievers*. † And in the Close of this Chapter, St Paul represents himself as speaking by divine Authority—*If any man (says he) think himself to be a Prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the Commandments of the Lord.* ‡ In like manner he commends the *Theſſalonians*, because, when they received the *Word of God*, which they heard of him, they received it, not as the *Word of Men*, but (*as it was in truth*) the *Word of God*. § And he tells them that *he that despiseth, despiseth not Man, but God, who (saith he) bath also given unto us his Holy Spirit*. And, if God gave his *Holy Spirit* to assist the *Apostles* in preaching the *Gospel*, he most certainly afforded the like Assistance to those who committed the *Gospel* to Writing. They also, in common with the rest, had the Promise of the *Holy Ghost* who should teach them all things, and bring all things to their Remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them. Without this (as I said

\* 1 Cor. xiv. 1, &c.  
\*\* iv. 8.

† xiv. 37.

‡ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

before)

before) we could have no sufficient Security that the Doctrines of *Christ* are truly delivered down to us. Two Qualifications indeed seem (at least to my Apprehension) requisite in an *Evangelist*; one, that he should be an *Eye-witness* of the principal Facts which he relates, for the Conviction of *Unbelievers*; the other, that he should write under the Guidance of the *Holy Spirit*, to assure *Believers* that the Doctrines of *Christ* are by him truly, and properly represented. This latter (though they themselves for reasons already given, do not particularly insist on it) I have now, as I hope, sufficiently proved was not wanting to them.

We have therefore now abundant Assurance of *the Certainty of those things, in which we have been instructed*. We have both *the Witness of Men*, and *the Witness of God*. We have the concurrent Testimony of four (or at least of two) *Eye-Witnesses* of our Saviour's Transactions, to whom God had given *the Promise of his Spirit to lead them into all Truth, and to bring all things to their Remembrance, whatsoever Christ had taught*. \* *This is the Witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.* <sup>y</sup> *And these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.*

But here a Question may arise, in what Man-

\* 1 Joh. v. 9.

y Joh. xx. 31.

ner, and how far the Pen-men of holy *Scripture* were inspired. This is a Question of some Difficulty, and perhaps of more Curiosity, than real Use. It may be sufficient to know in general, that they were guided by the *Holy Spirit of God*, and that what they have written is, *not the Word of Men, but the Word of God*. But, as curious Questions have been raised on this Subject, and from thence Occasion taken to invalidate the Truth of the *Gospel-History*, it may be proper to offer something upon this Subject. Here then I would observe that there are two Ways, by which any Person may dictate an Epistle, or Writing, to his Secretary: First, he may dictate to him the very Words, in which he is to express himself; or secondly, he may only dictate to him the Subject Matter, or particulars, concerning which he is to write, leaving him to express it in his own Words, but then overlooking, and taking Care that he delivers his Master's Sentiments truly, and properly: In either of these Cases the Writing so dictated, will be esteemed the Word, not of the Secretary, but of the Person, who dictated, it to him. Both these Methods we may suppose God to have used in dictating the holy *Scriptures*. In the Case of Prophesies, especially such as are introduced with this Preface—*This saith the Lord*—or the like, we may conclude that the very Words were dictated by the *Spirit of*

of God. But there is no Necessity of affirming the same of all Parts of Scripture, nor particularly of the historical Part.

As to the *Gospel History*, we know that our *Saviour* spoke in *Hebrew*, or *Syriack*, the common Language of the Country ; but the *Gospels* are written in *Greek*, and therefore they cannot give us the very Words, which our *Saviour* spoke. Besides they generally give us, not his Discourses at length, but only the Substance of them ; and therefore it is no wonder that they should express themselves differently : *The Spirit of God* might suffer them to use their own Language, and Expressions. But as we are assured, that *he would teach them all things, and bring all things to their Remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them*, he certainly so guided their Pens, as to give us a true and faithful Representation of our *Blessed Saviour's Doctrine*, though not always expressed in the same Words. And we accordingly find in them a perfect Agreement in Point of Doctrine ; nor can any Contradiction, or Inconsistency, in this Respect be justly charged upon them. Such an Agreement could never have happened, if they had been left to themselves, but plainly shews that they were guided by the same *Spirit*. And this especially, if we consider the Purity, and Excellence, of their Doctrine, how much above the Comprehension of such *unlearned and ignorant Men*, how far superior

to the boasted *Wisdom* of the *Greeks*, how opposite to the preconceived Notions, and Prejudices, then entertained by the *Jews* in general, and by themselves in particular. Their full Agreement in such Doctrines is a plain Proof that they *speak not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

As to Facts, the *Evangelists* do not pretend to deliver to us *all things which Jesus did*; for then, <sup>2</sup> as one of them tells us, *the World would not contain the Books that should be written*. Nor do they relate all the Circumstances of the same Facts; for this would have been tedious, and unnecessary. And some of them relate Transactions which others have omitted; and the same Transactions are related in a different Manner. This has occasioned some Variations between the different *Evangelists*, which as it has been made an Objection against their divine *Inspiration*, so *Christian Commentators* have found it difficult to reconcile some of them. But let us consider with what View these *Evangelists* wrote. It was not with Design to give us an exact detail of historical Facts, such as would satisfy a curious Enquirer, or learned Critick: <sup>3</sup> *But these things were written, that we might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.* To this End a compendious History of some of the chief Mi-

<sup>2</sup> Joh. xxi. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Joh. xx. 31.

racles, which he wrought, and a summary View of the Doctrines, which he taught, was sufficient. And as in those Times, when the Art of Printing was not known, large Volumes were beyond the Purchase of common Persons, it was thought necessary to comprise these Histories in as narrow a Compass as might be, that such Persons might not want Information of the great Truths of the *Gospel*. St. *Matthew* is generally supposed to be the earliest Writer of the *Gospel History*. He wrote it for the Use of the *Christians* in *Judæa*, that they might have an Account of the Miracles which *Jesus* wrought, and a summary, but sufficient, View of the Doctrines which he taught. St. *Mark* is most commonly supposed to be next in order of Time. At what Time, and on what particular Occasion, he wrote his *Gospel*, is not easy to say.  
¶ It seems to have been written after the *Apostles* had gone forth, and preached every where. When the *Apostles* had preached the Word among the *Gentiles*, it was expedient that another *Gospel* should be written for the Use of Converts, who lived at a Distance from *Judæa*. And for the same Reason, after St. *Paul* had propagated the *Gospel* in *Asia*, and *Greece*, and the Number of the *Disciples* multiplied greatly, it seemed good (as we have seen) to St. *Luke* to write his *Gospel*, that the good *Chris-*

¶ Mar. xvi. 20.

tians in those Parts might know the Certainty of those things, wherein they had been instructed. Last of all St. John wrote his *Gospel*. ‘ We are assured by good Authority, that the Occasion and Design of his writing this *Gospel*, was to guard against those Heresies, which then began to infest the Church; that he had the other *Gospels* before him, and that he revised, and confirmed them, and supplied what was wanting in their Narrations, purposely omitting most of those things which they had enlarged upon. And thus these *Gospels* taken together contain as compleat an Account of our *Blessed Saviour’s* Doctrine, and Life, as was necessary to be left on Record for the Instruction of latter Ages, that they also might believe that *Jesus was the Son of God, and that believing they might have Life through his Name*. But, as they were written at different Times, and on different Occasions; as they all (for the Reasons above given) studied Brevity; and as those, who followed, supplied many things, which were omitted by those who went before, this must occasion many Variations. Similar Facts are related by different *Evangelists*, which Harmonists have thought to have been the same. Thus our *Lord’s* Sermon, delivered by <sup>4</sup> St. *Matthew*, and <sup>5</sup> St. *Luke*, seem to be different Discourses,

<sup>4</sup> *Iren.* adv. *Hær.* L. iii. C. 11. *Euseb.* *Eccles. Hist.* L. iii. C. 24. L. vi. C. 14.—*Hieronym.* *de Vir. illustr.* *Prefat.* in *Evang. Matth.*   <sup>4</sup> *Matth.* v, vi, vii.   <sup>5</sup> *Luke* vi. 20, &c.

<sup>5</sup> one

<sup>f</sup> one delivered to his *Apostles* on the *Mount*, <sup>g</sup> the other delivered in the *Plain*, in the Audience of a great Multitude of People. Our Lord thought fit at different Times to deliver the same Doctrine, though with some Variety of Expression. Thus also our Lord might work the like Miracles, with many like Circumstances, on different Occasions, and on different Persons. And he might return the same, or like, Answer to the same Question proposed at different Times. Again, as the same Facts are delivered by different *Evangelists* with different Circumstances, it may be difficult to marshall them in their proper Order, or sometimes to reconcile them with each other. And therefore different Commentators have proposed different Methods; nor is it always easy (as it is no way necessary) to say precisely where the Truth lies. Thus far has been sufficiently proved by *Christian* Writers (and I hope will in some measure appear from these Papers) that the *Evangelists* all agree in the chief Facts recorded in the *Gospels*, and that they differ only in some minute Circumstances, which no way affect the Truth, or Credit, of the History. Thus, for instance, when one *Evangelist* relates a Cure wrought on two Persons, and another mentions only one, these Relations are no way inconsistent. On the other Hand, it is not uncommon, especially in short Compendiums

<sup>f</sup> Matth. v. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Luke vi. 17.

of History, to speak in the Plural Number of what is done only by one single Person. <sup>b</sup> Thus St. Matthew, designing to shew how our *Lord*, when hanging on the Cross, was mocked and reviled by all sorts of Persons, by those that passed by, by the chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders, adds that the Thieves also, which were crucified with him, did the same; whereas in Strictness of Speech, it was only one of them who thus reviled him, as <sup>c</sup> St. Luke has more accurately delivered it. Such Inaccuracies (and I can call them by no other Name) affect not the Credit of our *Evangelists*, either as Historians, or inspired Writers.

In short, the *Evangelists* (as has been before observed) may be considered in two different Lights. First, as Relators of Matters of Fact, which they had seen and heard: And in this they made Use of their own Memory, which enabled them to bear Record of the Word of God, and of the Testimony of Jesus Christ: They are full, and competent, Witnesses; and we know that their Testimony is true. But the Holy Spirit of God, though it did not supersede the Use of their own Faculties, yet assisted, and guided them: He brought to their Remembrance things which they might otherwise have forgot: He guided them into all Truth, and taught them truly to represent those Facts, and Doctrines, which,

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxvii. 44. See Hammond, Whitby, Grotii Annotat.

<sup>c</sup> Luke xxiii. 39, &c.

without his Assistance, they would have been liable to have misunderstood, or misrepresented. And thus were they doubly qualified to bear Testimony to the Truth, and give us all possible Assurance of the Certainty of those things in which we have been instructed. <sup>k</sup> And the Genuineness and Authenticity of these their Writings is attested by stronger, and fuller Evidence, than that of any other ancient Book whatever.

<sup>k</sup> This has been proved by many *Christian* Writers, particularly by the learned Dr. Chapman in his *Eusebius*, Vol. I. p. 332, &c. and by the Author of this Work, in *The Christian's Faith, a Rational Assent.* P. I. p. 63, &c.



## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THE great Reservedness visible in our *Saviour's* Conduct, the ambiguous and mysterious Manner, in which he generally declared his Mission, and delivered his Doctrines, has often been made an Objection against the Religion which he taught. This gave no small Offence to the *Jews* in his own Times, and has been a common Objection in the Mouth of Infidels ever since. <sup>2</sup> Our *Lord* has been charged with *not laying the Arguments and Proofs of his Mission before his Disciples*; with *having no Intention to prove his own Truth and Character by his Miracles*; with *being always remarkably upon the Reserve in that Respect*, &c. To such a Charge it might be sufficient to answer that the Fact is not universally true; that our *Saviour* did on proper Occasions give full Proof of his Mission; that he often asserted his divine Character in plain Terms; and that many of his Miracles were wrought in the most publick Manner; and that therefore, if on some Occasions he acted with more Caution and Reserve, it is but reasonable to conclude that he had good Reasons for such Conduct, even though such Reasons should not be apparent to us.

<sup>2</sup> See the Author's *Answer to Christianity not founded on Argument.* P. I. Ch. 3. p. 153.

But

But though such Answer may be thought fully satisfactory, yet, as the Nature and Proofs of our Religion cannot be too nicely scrutinized, I hope it will not be thought an improper, or useless, Undertaking, if I pursue this Matter farther, and enquire more minutely and particularly into the Motives and Reasons of our *Lord's* Conduct during his Ministry. Thus far must be allowed to be true, that our *Saviour* did frequently act with great Caution, and Reservedness; and that his Conduct was in this Respect very different from that of any other Teacher, who ever pretended a Divine Mission, whether truly, or falsely. <sup>b</sup> Moses, as soon as he had received the Divine Command, immediately went, and opened his Commission before the *Children of Israel*, and before *Pharaoh*. <sup>c</sup> The *Prophets*, when the *Word of the Lord came to them*, immediately girded up their Loins, and arose, and spake unto the People all that God commanded them: They were not afraid, nor dismayed, but set their Foreheads as an Adamant harder than Flint. I need not add that Impostors, and Enthusiasts, have been always forward enough to assert, and proclaim their Pretensions. But *Jesus* appears to have acted in a quite different Manner. We find him frequently avoiding to explain himself, or declare who he was, concealing himself from publick Notice, and delivering the important

<sup>b</sup> Exod. iv. and v.      <sup>c</sup> Jer. i. 17. Ezek. ii. 6. iii. 9.

Truths of the Gospel with great Reservedness and Ambiguity. His Answers were often such, as were no way satisfactory to those who applied to him; and some of his Discourses gave great, and seemingly unnecessary Offence, both to the People, and to his own Disciples. Nay many of his Sayings, even at this Day, exercise the Skill of the ablest Commentators; and it is often difficult to discover the Drift and Purpose of his Discourses, or their Pertinence to the Occasion and Subject before him. And all this may at first Sight seem very contrary to what might have been reasonably expected. As he was a Person sent by *God* to declare his Will, and make known the Truth, one would think he ought to have opened his Commission publickly, and to have declared who he was, and what the Purport of his Mission, with all Freedom, Plainness, and Clearness. Thus (as has been already observed) did all the Prophets before him; and thus did his own Apostles immediately after his Death, <sup>a</sup> *preaching the Word with all Boldness*. Accordingly we find this was objected to our *Lord*, in the Beginning, during the Course of his Ministry. <sup>b</sup> *The Jews said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* His Brethren made the same Objection—<sup>c</sup> *There is no Man that doth any thing in secret, and he himself*

<sup>d</sup> Acts iv. 29, 31.

<sup>e</sup> Joh. x. 24.

<sup>f</sup> Joh. vii. 4.

*seeketh to be known openly ; if thou do these Things, shew thyself to the World.* <sup>g</sup> His own Disciples seemed to wonder that he spake to the Multitude in Parables : <sup>h</sup> And on another Occasion we find them thus expressing themselves—*Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no Proverb*—thereby sufficiently intimating that they thought he had dealt too much in *Proverbs* before.

The most effectual Way of discovering whether our *Lord's* Procedure may be reasonably accounted for, and whether any real Objection lies from hence against him, or his Doctrine, will be to take a View of the whole Course of his Ministry ; to attend him from the Beginning, and enquire on what Motives he acted, and by what Rules he governed his Conduct. Such an Enquiry I have endeavoured to make with all Freedom and Sincerity. This, if *Christians* are mistaken in the Profession of their Faith, is a most likely means of discovering the Error ; and this, if the Gospel be true, must be of great Use to settle and confirm our Faith.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. xiii. 10.      <sup>h</sup> Joh. xvi. 29.

C H A P. I.

BEFORE we enter on the History of our *Saviour's Life*, it may be proper, *First*, to enquire in what Condition he found the *Jews*, the People to whom he was more immediately sent, and what Opinions and Principles were then prevailing among them: And on Enquiry we shall find them almost universally possessed with false Notions of the *Messiah*. <sup>i</sup> They were all at that Time in great *Expectation* of a *Messiah*, who should redeem *Israel*; but they imagined not that his Office was to redeem them from all *Iniquity*, but to deliver them from the Power of the *Romans*, <sup>k</sup> to restore the *Kingdom to Israel*, and re-instate them in temporal Grandeur and Dominion. His own Disciples, though they believed him to be <sup>l</sup> he, of whom *Moses in the Law, and the Prophets*, did write, yet expected to find in him a temporal *Messiah*: <sup>m</sup> They thought that the *Kingdom of God* would soon appear; and they hoped themselves to share in his Glory and Power, <sup>n</sup> to sit on his Right Hand, and on his Left Hand, in his *Kingdom*. One great End therefore of our *Saviour's Ministry*, and what he had primarily in View, was to remove these Prejudices, and cor-

<sup>i</sup> Luk. iii. 15.      xxiv. 21.      <sup>k</sup> Acts i. 6.      <sup>l</sup> Joh. i. 45.

<sup>m</sup> Luk. xix. 11.      <sup>n</sup> Matt. xx. 20, &c.

rect this false Notion of the *Messiah's Office*; to take off Men's *Affections* from this World, and *set them on Things above*; and to teach and enforce the Practice of real Virtue and Piety.

Let us then see how these Designs were prosecuted. Our Blessed Saviour came into the World under all possible Disadvantages with regard to outward Circumstances of earthly Grandeur. He was born of a poor Woman, *Wife to a Carpenter*, living in an obscure Corner of the Land, in *Nazareth*, a *City of Galilee*,<sup>o</sup> out of which the Jews expected no good Thing;<sup>p</sup> and from whence they thought no *Prophet could arise*. He was brought forth in the Stable of an Inn,<sup>q</sup> and <sup>r</sup> *laid in a Manger*. His Parents Circumstances were so mean, and so little their Credit and Interest, that they could not, at this Time of publick Concourse, gain Admission into *the Inn*, or procure any Place fit for the Reception and Accommodation of a Woman in her Condition.<sup>s</sup> And again, *when the Days of Mary's Purification were accomplished*, her Poverty would not permit her to offer *a Lamb*, but only *a Pair of Turtle-Doves, or two young Pigeons*. And yet his Birth at the same Time was attended with very extraordinary Attestations of his being the *Messiah*.  
*The Virgin Mary was assured by an Angel*, that

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xiii. 55.      <sup>p</sup> Joh. i. 46.      <sup>q</sup> Joh. vii. 52.  
<sup>r</sup> Luk. ii. 7.      <sup>s</sup> Comp. Luk. ii. 22, &c.      <sup>t</sup> Lev. xii. 8.  
<sup>t</sup> Luk. i. 31, 32.

she should conceive in her Womb, and bring forth a Son, and should call his Name Jesus ; that he should be great, and should be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God should give unto him the Throne of his Father David. <sup>a</sup> And again, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a Dream, and told him, that Mary his espoused Wife should bring forth a Son, and he should call his Name Jesus ; for he should save his People from their Sins ; and that his Name should be called Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. <sup>w</sup> Zacharias was also told by an Angel, that his Wife Elizabeth should bear him a Son, who should turn many of the Children of Israel to the Lord their God ; and should go before him in the Spirit and Power of Elias. And he, expressing some Doubt of the Truth of this Prediction, was struck dumb, and continued so till the Circumcision of this his Son, <sup>x</sup> when his Mouth was opened immediately, and his Tongue loosed : And he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying—*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his People, and hath raised up an Horn of Salvation for us in the House of his Servant David ; as he spake by the Mouth of his Holy Prophets, which have been since the World began : &c.* And Fear came on all that dwelt round about them ; and all these Sayings were noised abroad throughout all the Hill-Country of Judæa. <sup>y</sup> Again, at our Lord's Birth, the

<sup>a</sup> Matt. i. 20, &c.    <sup>w</sup> Luk. i. 13, &c.    <sup>x</sup> Luk. i. 64, &c,

<sup>y</sup> Luk. ii. 8, &c.

*Angel of the Lord appeared to some Shepherds abiding in the Field, and the Glory of the Lord shone round about them. And the Angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all People. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* And the Shepherds made known abroad the Saying which was told them concerning this Child.<sup>z</sup> And, when he was afterwards presented in the Temple, both Simeon and Anna publickly acknowledged him to be the *Messiah*, and spake of him unto all them that looked for Redemption in Jerusalem.<sup>a</sup> It was also so ordered by Providence, that just before the Time of his Birth, the Roman Emperor should issue out a Decree that all the World should be taxed, which obliged Joseph and Mary at this Time to remove to their own City *Bethlehem*. And thus it came to pass, not only that the Prophecy was fulfilled, that he should be born in *Bethlehem of Judea*, but also that the Place of his Birth, and his Descent from *David*, were publickly registered in the Roman Archives. Accordingly, to these Archives both <sup>b</sup>*Justin* and <sup>c</sup>*Tertullian* appeal.<sup>d</sup> This his Birth was soon after notified to *Herod the King*, and to all *Jerusalem*, by the wise Men who came from the East, to enquire where they might find him, who was born King of the Jews; for they had seen his Star

<sup>z</sup> Luk. ii. 25, &c.   <sup>a</sup> Luk. ii. 1, &c.   <sup>b</sup> Apol. i. p. 75.

<sup>c</sup> Lib. adv. Marc. 4. Cap. 7.   <sup>d</sup> Matt. ii. 1, &c.

in the East, and were come to worship him. And the cruel Massacre, which afterwards followed at *Beth-lehem*, must make this more publickly taken Notice of, and impress the Memory of it on Men's Minds. All these Circumstances put together, though they bore but an unpromising Aspect with regard to a temporal *Messiah*, yet could not fail to affect all serious Persons; and, when our *Saviour* afterwards entered on his Ministry, the Remembrance of them must carry great Weight and Conviction with wise and good Men. It may farther be observed, that some of these Attestations declare *Jesus* to be the *Messiah* in more plain and express Terms, than he himself afterwards made use of. He is called <sup>c</sup> *a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of Israel*; <sup>d</sup> *a Horn of Salvation in the House of David*; <sup>e</sup> and in plain Terms, *Christ the Lord*. It was owing to the Meanness of his Appearance, and the low Circumstances of his Parents, that they were not at first more publickly taken Notice of. Some of them were given only to his Parents and Kinsfolk. The Testimony of a few Shepherds might easily pass unregarded; and *Simeon* and *Anna*, though *just and devout* Persons, were not probably Persons of any Rank, or Distinction. <sup>f</sup> But when *the wise Men came from the East*, and openly declared there was a *King of the Jews born*, this

<sup>c</sup> Luk. ii. 32,

<sup>f</sup> Luk. i. 69.

<sup>e</sup> Luk. ii. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Matth. ii. 1, &c.

gave the Alarm to Herod and all Jerusalem ; and a divine Interposition became necessary to remove the Child out of the Reach of their Jealousy.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph therefore, being warned of God, took the young Child and his Mother by Night, and departed into Egypt ; and afterwards, on the Death of Herod, in Obedience to another divine Admonition, he returned into the Land of Israel, and fixed his Residence again at Nazareth. But, though so many extraordinary Circumstances attended the Birth of this Child, there does not appear to have been any Use made of them for near thirty Years : <sup>2</sup> His Mother Mary kept all these Things, and pondered them in her Heart ; but we do not find that either she, or any of his Friends, or Relations, took any Step towards preparing the People for his Reception ; nor are there any the least Appearances of any Design carrying on of setting him up for the Messiah. The Evidences which accompanied his Birth lay all this while dormant. Nay afterwards, the Jews, at least those of Jerusalem, knew nothing of all these surprising Events : They objected to our Lord that he was a Nazarene ; <sup>3</sup> they said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee ? Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the Seed of David, and out of the Town of Bethlehem ? <sup>4</sup> Our Lord, for near thirty Years, lived in a State of Privacy and Obscurity, continuing with

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ii. 12, &c.      <sup>2</sup> Luk. ii. 19.      <sup>3</sup> Joh. vii. 41, 42.  
<sup>4</sup> Luk. ii. 51.

his Father and Mother at the despised City *Nazareth*, and being subject unto them<sup>n</sup>. We read that <sup>o</sup> he increased in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man; but no Action of his is recorded during this Interval, only that <sup>p</sup> when he was twelve Years old, he was carried up by his Father and Mother to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover, and there conversed with the Doctors in the Temple, and astonished them with his Understanding and Answers: But when his Parents told him that they had sought him sorrowing, he said unto them, *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's Business?* (or, as the Words may be translated, *in my Father's House*—ἐν τοῖς ταῖς Πατρός με). Here we see from the Child Jesus, while he was yet but twelve Years old, a plain Intimation that he was the *Son of God*, but given only to his *Father and Mother*, or perhaps some of his *Kinsfolk*, and such as at that Time was not understood, or regarded by any, but only his *Mother*, who kept all these Sayings in her Heart.

The next Step taken by Providence to evidence the Divine Mission of Jesus, was by the Preaching of John the Baptist. <sup>q</sup> Zacharias his Father had

<sup>n</sup> Justin Martyr tells us, that he worked at the Carpenters Trade. *Dialog. cum Tryph.* p. 316. and this seems to be confirmed by Mar. vi. 3, where the Citizens of Nazareth object —*Is not this the Carpenter, the Son of Mary?*

<sup>o</sup> Luk. ii. 52.    <sup>p</sup> Luk. ii. 41, &c.    <sup>q</sup> Luk. i. 76.

foretold that he should go before the Face of the Lord to prepare his Ways.<sup>†</sup> And this he did partly by preaching Repentance, and recommending the strictest Holiness, and Purity of Manners, and that with such Success, that Persons of all Ranks and Conditions resorted to him, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their Sins.<sup>‡</sup> He was also sent to bear Witness of the Light, that all Men through him might believe; and this he did frequently, in the strongest and plainest Terms.<sup>†</sup> The Motive on which he urged Repentance was, that the Kingdom of Heaven, or Time of the Messiah, was at Hand:<sup>§</sup> And when he found the People in Expectation, and all Men mused in their Hearts, whether he was the Christ, or not, John referred them to one who was <sup>¶</sup> mightier than he, who, though he should come after him, should be preferred before him, for he was before him, whose Shoes he was not worthy to bear.<sup>¶</sup> Soon after came Jesus himself to be baptized of John.<sup>¶</sup> He was before

<sup>†</sup> Luk. iii. 1, &c.    Matt. iii. 1, &c.    Mar. i. 1, &c.

<sup>‡</sup> Joh. i. 7.    <sup>†</sup> Matt. iii. 2.    <sup>¶</sup> Luk. iii. 15, &c.    <sup>¶</sup> Matt. iii. 11, &c.    Mar. i. 7.    Joh. i. 15.    <sup>¶</sup> Matt. iii. 13, &c.    Mar. i. 9, &c.    Luk. iii. 21.    <sup>¶</sup> Joh. i. 31. It should seem strange that Jesus should be unknown to John: Their Mothers, Mary and Elizabeth, were Cousins, and seem to have been intimately acquainted: The Prophecies concerning both of them, the extraordinary Events accompanying their Birth, the mutual Relation they were to bear to each other with regard to their Offices, are Circumstances, which one would think could not fail to have kept up an Intercourse between

unknown by Person to *John*; but on his coming to him, *John* seems to have had some inward Assurance that this was he, before whom he was sent to prepare the Way: <sup>y</sup> He therefore declined the Office of baptizing him, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* And *Jesus* an-

between them. Had they indeed acted by Compact this must have been the Case: But, on the other Hand, it does not appear how nearly related *Mary* and *Elizabeth* were: They are *εὐαγγεῖλοι*, which may signify only a distant Relation: Supposing them first *Cousins*, yet the Children of first Cousins living at a remote Distance from one another, are often unknown to each other, especially if the Persons are of low Rank. *Both Zacharias and Elizabeth were well stricken in Years* when *John* was born, and might probably die soon after. *John* during his younger Years lived in Privacy and Retirement, and *was in the Deserts till the Day of his shewing unto Israel*; (Luk. i. 80.) while *Jesus* continued in the like, or greater Obscurity, a *Carpenter at Nazareth*. Though *John* was probably acquainted with the Prophecies concerning himself, he might have no Occasion, or Opportunity, to enquire after, or come to the Knowledge of *Jesus*. He certainly took no Step towards fulfilling what was prophesied concerning him, till he was now thirty Years old, when the *Word of God came to him*, and he was called upon by immediate Inspiration to enter on his Office. It appears indeed from what we read, (Matt. iii. 14.) that he knew *Jesus* at first Sight, before he was *baptized*, and before he *saw the Spirit descending from Heaven upon him*: But we may reasonably suppose that he knew this by immediate Revelation: *God had given John a Sign*, by which he might know the *Messias*: On his Arrival, *God* first by present Revelation assured him that this was he, and then confirmed this Assurance by the Sign promised. See *Hammond, Whiby Annot. Lightfoot Harm. Clarke Paraphr.* <sup>y</sup> Matt. iii. 14.

*swering*

swering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness.* And after his Baptism he received a farther and fuller Confirmation that he was the *Messiah*: *The Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him: And lo, a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This Appearance and Voice was given as a Sign to *John*, <sup>2</sup> who had been before assured by Revelation, that *upon whom he should see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same was he which should baptize with the Holy Ghost.* Possibly no one besides was present at this *Baptism*; at least we do not find that any one besides, saw and heard this Vision, and Voice: But *John saw, and bare Record, that this was the Son of God.* <sup>3</sup> Afterwards, when the *Priests and Levites came from Jerusalem to ask John who he was, he confessed he was not the Christ, but his Fore-runner, and referred them to one, who stood among them, whom they knew not.* <sup>4</sup> The next Day he personally pointed him out to his own Disciples, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World.* And he told them that he saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a Dove, and it abode upon him: And he saw and bare Record that this was the Son of God. The like Attestation he repeated the Day following

<sup>2</sup> Joh. i. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Joh. i. 19, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Joh. i. 29, &c.

to two of his Disciples, who thereupon became Followers of Jesus, and made Report of what they had heard to others of their Acquaintance. <sup>c</sup> Lastly, when Jesus began to baptize, and many resorted to him, John's Disciples complained to him that Jesus drew away the People to himself: But John's Answer was, that *they themselves might bear him Witness,* that he said, that he himself was not the Christ, but was sent before him; that Jesus was the Bridegroom; that he came from Heaven, and was above all; that he was sent by God, and spoke the Words of God; and that God gave not the Spirit by Measure unto him; in fine, that he was the Son of God, and that he that believeth on him hath everlasting Life, but he that believeth not him shall not see Life.

<sup>d</sup> The Strength and Force of this Testimony of John the Baptist has been lately set in a clear Light by Mr. Fortin. I shall only observe farther, that St. John throughout, in all his Discourses, sets forth Jesus as a spiritual Messiah. <sup>e</sup> He tells the Jews, that he should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire; that his Fan was in his Hand, and he would thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner, but would burn up the Chaff with un-

<sup>c</sup> Joh. iii. 25, &c.    <sup>d</sup> Disc. V. See also a Treatise lately published by Mr. Bell, of Magd. Coll. Cambr. wherein he hath fully demonstrated the Divine Mission both of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, from the several Circumstances of their Birth and Preaching.    <sup>e</sup> Matt. iii. 11, 12.

*quenchable Fire.* He calls him <sup>f</sup> *the Son of God,* <sup>g</sup> *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World;* <sup>h</sup> *who should confer everlasting Life on those who believed on him;* <sup>i</sup> *one who came from above, from Heaven, who was not of the Earth, nor spoke of the Earth, and whose Testimony therefore was not received.* And St. John's own Preaching was of the same spiritual Nature. His Life was austere and mortified; <sup>k</sup> *he drank neither Wine nor strong Drink;* <sup>l</sup> *his Meat was Locusts and wild Honey;* *he had his Raiment of Camel's Hair, and a leathern Girdle about his Loins.* <sup>m</sup> He prepared the Way of the Lord by *preaching Repentance for the Remission of Sins:* <sup>n</sup> He exhorted all Men to *confess their Sins,* <sup>o</sup> and to forsake those Vices, to which they by their Profession stood most exposed: <sup>p</sup> He rebuked with great Severity the *Pharisees and Sadducees;* represented to them the Folly of boasting their Descent from *Abraham;* and exhorted them to *bring forth the proper Fruits of Repentance.*

<sup>f</sup> Joh. i. 34.

<sup>g</sup> Joh. i. 29.

<sup>h</sup> Joh. iii. 36.

<sup>i</sup> Joh. iii. 31, 32.

<sup>k</sup> Luk. i. 15.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. iii. 4.

<sup>m</sup> Luk. iii. 3, 4.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. iii. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Luk. iii. 12, &c.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. iii. 7, &c.

C H A P. II.

AFTER these Attestations, one might have expected, that *Jesus* would now immediately have entered publickly on his Ministry. Had he been an Impostor, he doubtless would not have failed to improve so favourable an Opportunity.

<sup>¶</sup> All the People were now in *Expectation*; <sup>†</sup> all had *John* in high Estimation, and held him for a *Prophet*. Had then he and *John* acted by Compact, he would immediately have pursued so successful a Stroke, and set out on the Credit which such Attestation must have given him. The like would have happened had they both been Enthusiasts: *Jesus* would instantly have taken Fire at the other's Flame, and thus authorized by *John's* Testimony, and by a supposed Appearance and *Voice from Heaven*, would immediately have asserted his Pretensions with all imaginable Warmth and Eagerness.

<sup>§</sup> On the contrary we find him retiring into the *Wilderness*, staying there *forty Days*, <sup>‡</sup> and soon after returning again into *Galilee*. Nor did he (as far as we can find) make his appearance at *Jerusalem*, or in *Judæa*, till next Year, when the Solemnity of the *Passover* required his Attendance there. We read

<sup>¶</sup> Luk. iii. 15.      <sup>†</sup> Matt. xxi. 26.      <sup>‡</sup> Matt. iv. 1, &c.

<sup>‡</sup> Joh. i. 43.      ii. 1, &c.

but

but little of him during this Interval; only we find he retained some few *Disciples*. " *Two of them followed him on John's Recommendation, Andrew, and another.* \* This other *Disciple* is generally supposed to be St. *John the Evangelist*, according to the usual way of that Writer's forbearing to mention his own Name. These having seen and talked with *Jesus*, and being convinced that he was the *Christ*, *Andrew*, one of them, imparts the good Tidings to his *Brother Simon*, and brings him also to *Jesus*. The next Day *Jesus* met with *Philip*, and called him to be his *Disciple*. *Philip found Nathanael*, and introduced him to *Jesus*. *Nathanael*, though at first he could not easily comprehend how *any good thing could come out of Nazareth*, yet was soon convinced by *Jesus*'s Discourse that he was the *Son of God, the King of Israel*. \* And here we may observe that

" *Joh. i. 57, &c.*    \* Here I would offer a Conjecture, why the other *Evangelists* pass over in Silence so many considerable Actions of our *Saviour*, which are recorded by St. *John*. St. *John*, having been a *Disciple* of *John the Baptist*, and being so early called by our *Saviour*, might be himself a Witness to most of what he relates in his four first Chapters: But St. *Matthew* was called later, and therefore he contents himself with a brief Recital of what happened at our *Saviour's Birth, Baptism, &c.* but afterwards gives a more full Detail of his other Actions, to which possibly he might be himself a Witness. And perhaps the same Reason may hold with regard to St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*.

\* It is probable that *Nathanael* was usually called among his Acquaintance the *Israelite indeed, or the Israelite without Guile,*

though *Jesus* did not in express Words declare to these Disciples that he was the *Christ*, yet he accepted of their Professions of Faith. *Andrew* told *Simon* that *he had found the Messias*; and *Philip* told *Nathanael* that *he had found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write*. It was on this Persuasion that they joined themselves to *Jesus*, and there can be no Doubt but they made him suitable Acknowledgements. *Nathanael* plainly professed his Faith before him—*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*; and our *Lord* plainly declared his Acceptance and Approbation of this his Faith. *Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the Fig-Tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.* This may possibly relate to his Ascension, when the *Apostles* saw the *Heaven opened*, and our *Lord* ascending thither attended by the Angels.

But what I would chiefly here observe, is the Title our *Lord* here gives himself of *the Son of Man*.

*Guile*, it being common among the *Jews* to give Men such Denominations from something peculiar in their Character. *Nathanael* was therefore surprized to find this known to *Jesus*, who was a perfect Stranger to him. But when he found him privy to some Transactions *under the Fig-Tree*, which he thought no one could know but himself alone, this, added to *Philip's* Testimony, finished his Conviction.

*Nathanael*

Nathanael calls him *the Son of God*; but he styles himself only *the Son of Man*. And this is the Title by which he usually distinguishes himself. He is generally thought to refer to *Dan. vii. 13*, where the *Messiah* is described, as *one like the Son of Man, coming with the Clouds of Heaven, &c.* And this is greatly confirmed by our Saviour's often applying to himself, as *the Son of Man*, the very same Expressions: <sup>1</sup> He tells his *Disciples*, that *they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory.* He seems therefore to have chosen this Appellation, as carrying with it (especially in his manner of using and applying it) sufficient Intimation that he was the *Messiah*, and yet the most humble Title he could choose, and that which could give the least Offence. He calls himself only the *Son of Man*; but to this *Son of Man* he ascribes such Actions and Powers, as plainly denote him more than Man:

<sup>2</sup> This *Son of Man* had *Power on Earth to forgive Sins*:

<sup>3</sup> *Angels should be seen ascending and descending upon this Son of Man*; <sup>4</sup> and he himself *should be seen ascending up where he was before*: <sup>5</sup> *No Man* (faith our Lord to Nicodemus) *hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven.* <sup>6</sup> *This Son of Man should come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, and should*

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Joh. i. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Joh. vi. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Joh. iii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xvi. 27.

reward every Man according to his Works. • This Son of Man was also the Son of God ; and the Hour was coming, in the which all that were in the Graves should hear his Voice, and should come forth, they that had done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life ; and they that had done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.

<sup>e</sup> But before our Saviour entered on his Ministry, he was led by the Spirit into the Wildernes, where he continued fasting forty Days and forty Nights, and was tempted of the Devil. We have no particular Account in Scripture of what passed during this Time. We are only told, that when these forty Days were ended, the Tempter came to him. This Tempter we find was *Satan*, the Prince of the Devils : He probably pretended to be an Angel of Light, sent to minister to our Lord's Necessities, and appeared in the Habit, and Form, of a Man, as we read that Angels on some Occasions have done. Some, deterred by some Difficulties in this short Account of our Saviour's Temptation, have imagined that the whole was transacted only in a Vision : But it is not easy to say what End such Vision could serve ; how it could be a Temptation ; or what Trial or Proof it could make of our Lord's Virtue, or Superiority, over the Devil. I see no Difficulty in supposing that *Satan*, pretend-

<sup>e</sup> Joh. v. 25, 27, &c.      <sup>f</sup> Matt. iv. 1, &c.      Mar. i. 12, 13.      Luk. iv. 1, &c.

ing to be a good Angel, should appear in the Likeness of a Man. In this Form then, I suppose, he came to our *Lord*, and seeing him almost famished with Hunger, he endeavoured to take Advantage of his Distress, and would have persuaded him to relieve himself by a Miracle, and said unto him—  
*If thou be the Son of God, command that these Stones be made Bread.* As this would have argued a Difidence in God's Providence, our *Saviour* rejected the Temptation, and gave the Tempter an apt Answer in the Words of *Scripture*—*Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.* This Temptation failing, the *Devil* tries another: He brought him to *Jerusalem*, and set him on the Battlements of the Temple. Many Commentators have imagined that the *Devil* carried our *Lord* through the Air: But this could not be done without a Miracle: Besides, such an Appearance of two Men flying so far through the Air must have alarmed the whole Country and City. The *Scripture* says no such thing, but rather the contrary: \* It represents them as going first into the City, and then into the Temple. The *Devil*, we may suppose, invited our *Lord* to go with him to *Jerusalem*. Our *Lord*, knowing his own Superiority, thus far complied with him. The *Devil* led him, the same Way that other Men went, into the City, and

\* μεγαλωσάμενος Matt.—ηγένετο Luk.

then

then to the Temple. Being in the Temple, he led him by the common Passage up to the Top, and there placed him—*εν τῷ πλευρῷ*<sup>b</sup> not on a Pinnacle, but on the Battlements of the Temple. As he had found it in vain to tempt him to any Act, which might argue a Diffidence in God's Providence, he now attempted to persuade him to an Act of Presumption, and said unto him—*If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down*—And for this he pretended to quote Scripture Authority: But our Lord again answered with another Text of Scripture—*It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* The Devil, being thus twice baffled, was yet resolved to make another Trial: *He therefore taketh him up into an exceeding high Mountain, and sheweth him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* There certainly can be no Mountain from whence all the kingdoms of the Earth may be seen. But I would interpret it in this manner: I would suppose, that the Devil carried our Saviour to an high Mountain, from whence he had a View of Jerusalem, and an extensive Prospect of the Country round about; and that he shewed this to our Lord as a Specimen of all other Kingdoms. He might possibly accost our Lord in some such Form as this: You see here this great and goodly

<sup>b</sup> See *Hammond. Grotii Annot.*

City, and this fine and extensive Country : This I shew you as a Specimen of all other Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them : Over all these will I give thee Power, and make thee King, not only over the *Jews*, but over all the Earth ; for such Power is delivered unto me, and I will transfer it to thee, if thou wilt only fall down, and do me Obeysance for it. Our *Saviour*, being thus tempted to the most horrid Impiety, rejected the impudent Proposal with just Indignation, and at the same Time gave the Tempter to understand he knew who he was : *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Satan thus discovered, and defeated, left him, and behold, *Angels came and ministered unto him.*

Our *Lord*, thus authorized by the Baptism of *John*, and a Voice from *Heaven*, and prepared for his Ministry by fasting and Temptation, began now to enter upon it. <sup>1</sup> But hearing that *John* was cast into Prison, he departed into *Galilee*. <sup>2</sup> And soon after his Arrival there, he was invited to a Marriage-Feast at *Cana*. At this Feast the *Wine* began to fail, whether through the Poverty of the married Persons, or the Number of the Guests. *The Mother of Jesus*, who was there, being sensible of this Want, and respecting the Credit of the new-married Persons, who probably were of Kin to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Joh. ii. 1, &c.

her

her, represents the Matter to her *Son*, hoping he would supply the Defect. She had, from the Beginning, before his Birth, been acquainted that he was the *Messiah*; she had all along observed, and laid up in her Heart the Proofs that from Time to Time occurred of his *Divine Mission*; she knew that *John* had lately borne Testimony to him, and had by *Baptism* solemnly consecrated him to his ministerial Function; she saw him now begin to retain *Disciples*; and therefore she now began to expect to see him enter on his Commission, and give some miraculous Proofs of his divine Authority, and this she thought might be no improper Occasion for it. An Impatience this in such a Person very pardonable; but yet *Jesus* thought it necessary to check her Forwardness. He knew her Thoughts,<sup>1</sup> and told her that it did not become her to interfere in these Affairs; that *his Hour was not yet come*: I suppose the Meaning to be, that it was not yet a proper Time to work his Miracles so publickly, as his *Mother* seemed to expect: But she seems to have mistaken him, and to have understood him (as *Grotius* and other

<sup>1</sup> The Words in the Original are—*Ti μοι οὐ σοι*—which are not so harsh as they seem in our Translation, especially, if we suppose them spoken in private. It is an Expression intimating a Dislike of any thing proposed, and forbidding the Person to interfere. See 2 Sam. xix. 22. See *Hammond* Annot.

Commentators have done since) to mean, that it was not yet Time to work this particular Miracle, but that he would do it, when he saw Occasion. Accordingly, she directed the Waiters to observe his Orders: And Jesus complied with her Desires, and supplied the Want of Wine by a Miracle: But then he did it in so private a Manner, that neither *the Governor of the Feast*, nor the Guests, but only *the Servants who drew the Water*, and his own *Disciples*, knew of it. This Miracle seems indeed to have been wrought more peculiarly for the Conviction and Confirmation of his new *Disciples*. And accordingly it is said, that *this Beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, <sup>m</sup> and manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him.*

<sup>m</sup> The Word Glory seems to refer to the Shechinah, or Appearance of Glory in the Tabernacle, and Temple. This is always in the Old Testament called *the Glory of the Lord*. And thus Joh. i. 14. *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us—*κατεστησεν σε μαρτυριον*—as he resided in the Jewish Tabernacle, so here he resided, in our Flesh, amongst us—and we beheld his Glory.* His heavenly Doctrine and Miracles as fully evidenced the Presence of God amongst us, as *the Glory of the Lord* in the Tabernacle manifested the divine Presence there. And thus here—*he manifested forth his Glory:* This Miracle manifested his Divine Power, and convinced his Disciples that God was with them, resident in Person among them. See Hammond on Joh. i. 14.

## C H A P. III.

**F**ROM hence Jesus went to *Capernaum*, and after some short Stay there, went up to *Jerusalem*, where the Solemnity of the *Passover* now required his Attendance. We have but a very short Account of his Transactions there; we find however that he wrought several Miracles, though what they were is no where particularly recorded: <sup>n</sup> It is said, that *many at Jerusalem believed in his Name, when they saw the Miracles which he did:* <sup>p</sup> Nicodemus was convinced, that he was a Teacher come from God, because no Man could do those Miracles that he did, except God were with him: <sup>q</sup> And afterwards, on his Return to Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all things that he did at *Jerusalem, at the Feast.*

Here at this *Passover*, he exercised his Authority in driving out the Market-People, and the Changers of Money from the Temple. There being such a Concourse of People at *Jerusalem, at the Passover*, and so many Sacrifices to be offered, it was necessary there should be a Market for the Sale of Sheep, and Oxen, and such Animals as were allowed to be sacrificed: And as Money must be

<sup>n</sup> Joh. ii. 12, 13.<sup>o</sup> Joh. ii. 23.<sup>p</sup> Joh. iii. 2.<sup>q</sup> Joh. iv. 45.<sup>r</sup> Joh. ii. 14, &c.

wanting both to purchase Sacrifices, and to make the usual Offerings at the Feast, there was Business for *Money-Changers*, to change greater Coin into less, and possibly too, to lend or return Money. And this Trade had, it seems, under pretence of greater Convenience, been brought into the Temple, and was carried on in the Outer Court, or Court of the *Gentiles*, the Place appointed for those among the *Gentiles*, who should come to worship *God* at *Jerusalem*. And it is probable, that the Seats and Tables of these Merchants, and the Folds and Conveniences for their Cattle, were let out by the Priests and Officers of the Temple, and an unjust and exorbitant Gain made, as well by the Priests, as by these *Money-Changers* and Traders. The Zeal therefore, which our *Lord* shewed on this Occasion, was doubly instructive, and designed both to teach the *Jews*, that a Reverence was due to the *House of God*, and also to presignify, that the *Gentiles* were soon to be admitted into Covenant with *God*, and that their Court, \* as well as the rest of the Temple, was holy, and to be kept free from all Defilements. † Accordingly, when our *Lord* again, just before his Passion, drove out these Prophaners of the Temple, he quoted

\* The *Jews* seem to have esteemed only the Inner Temple to be holy; and for this Reason possibly they might allow this Use to be made of the Court of the *Gentiles*. See *Joseph. de Bell. Jud. L. 5. C. 5.* † *Matt. xxi. 12.*

that

that Prophecy of *Isaiah*—<sup>v</sup> *My House shall be called an House of Prayer for all People*—which is plainly prophetical of the Calling of the *Gentiles*. For these Reasons, our *Lord drove them all out of the Temple, and the Sheep, and the Oxen*; and poured out the *Changers Money*, and overthrew the *Tables*; and said unto them that sold *Doves*, *Take these things hence; make not my Father's House an House of Merchandise*. This was a Plain Intimation that he was the *Son of God*, and we find by the Answer of the *Jews*, that they so understood him. It may seem strange, that our *Lord* met with no Resistance from these People: This might be owing to some divine Impression of Fear on their Minds, or to a Consciousness that this was an unlawful Traffick. Besides, it is probable that our *Saviour* might before this have wrought some Miracles, which might have engaged the People in his Favour, and stricken these Traffickers with Terror. But then it may be asked—if this were the Case, how came the *Jews* to ask him—*What Sign shewest thou unto us?* &c. This may possibly receive some Explanation by comparing it with *Matt. xii. 38, &c.* and *xvi. 1, &c.* <sup>w</sup> In the first Place, we find the Scribes and Pharisees demanding <sup>x</sup> *a Sign from him*, after he had wrought many Miracles, and had

<sup>v</sup> *If. lvi. 7.*<sup>w</sup> *Matt. xii. 38, &c.*<sup>x</sup> *Luk. xi. 16.**a Sign from Heaven.*

just performed a very extraordinary one before their Eyes, the Truth of which they could not deny. <sup>1</sup> And again, *Matt. xvi. 1*, though he had then preached, and wrought Miracles for above two Years, *the Pharisees with the Sadducees came, and desired that he would shew them a Sign from Heaven.* Again, immediately after the great Miracle of the Loaves, <sup>2</sup> we find the Jews still asking—*What Sign shewest thou?* <sup>3</sup> Again, his Disciples, just before his Passion, asked him—*What shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* and our Saviour referred them to some future Coming of his—<sup>4</sup> *Then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven—and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory.* From a Comparison of these Passages it appears probable, that the Jews (whether from some Prophecy of the Old Testament, or from some Tradition of their own) expected the *Messiah* to be pointed out, and attested by some particular *Sign*, or Appearance, *from Heaven.* And this might be one Reason why, *though he had done so many Miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, because they did not see that particular Sign*, which they had been erroneously taught to expect. The Answer our Lord here gives the Jews is the same in Effect, as what he afterwards gave the Scribes and Pharisees,

<sup>1</sup> *Matt. xvi. 1.*

<sup>2</sup> *Joh. vi. 30.*

<sup>3</sup> *Matt. xxiv. 3.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid. 30.*

when

when they made the same Demand, only wrapt up in more Mystery and Ambiguity—*Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up.* He neither denies, nor expressly declares himself to be the *Christ*; but intimates, that his Mission would hereafter be attested by a great and Notable *Sign*, that of his Resurrection, which was to signify, and declare the commencement of his Kingdom. <sup>c</sup> As this was therefore (though obscurely delivered) a proper Answer to their Question, so is it one among many Instances of the Method he took to declare himself to the Jews, which he usually did in such Terms, as every one at the time then present could not understand, but yet carried such an Evidence in them, to those who should reflect on it, when the whole Course of his Ministry was over, as might convince them that he was the *Christ*. Thus we find that neither the Jews, nor his own Disciples understood this Speech of his at that Time; but, *when he was risen from the Dead, his Disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the Word which Jesus had said.* They then understood, that by the *Temple* he meant his own *Body*, which was the *Habitation* of the *Divinity*, and that by *raising it up in three Days*, he meant his own Resurrection within that Time; and this convinced

<sup>c</sup> See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 77, &c.

them that he was a Prophet, and led them to reflect on those *Scriptures*, which had foreshewn his Resurrection, and to acknowledge the Truth both of his, and of the ancient Prophecies.

In the 24th and 25th Verses of this Chapter we have a Reason given, why *Jesus* acted with such Caution, and wrapt up his Meaning in such obscure and ambiguous Expressions—*Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all Men, and needed not that any should testifie of Man, for he knew what was in Man.* These Words, if I mistake not, will furnish us with a Key, which will let us into the whole Mystery of our *Saviour's* Conduct. The *Jews* were, as we have seen, possessed with false Notions of a temporal *Messiah*. Had our *Lord* then openly and publickly declared, that he was the *Messiah*, this would have been, to their Apprehensions, setting himself up for a temporal Prince, and all who were convinced by his Miracles, would have been ready to rise, and take up Arms in his Favour, while, on the other Hand, the Government would have been alarmed, and used all Methods to seize, and destroy him. \*We find that, on the first News of the King of the *Jews* being born, Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and the most wicked and cruel Measures were taken to destroy this King. What then

\* Matt. ii. 3.

would

would have been the Consequence, if *Jesus* had openly declared himself the *Christ*? Would not the Chief Priests and Rulers, whose Interests were at Stake, have been ready immediately to arrest, and accuse him? Would not the *Roman* Governors also have taken the Alarm, and thought themselves bound in Duty to *Cæsar* to put him to Death? Nay, had the *Jews* been generally engaged in his Favour, the *Romans* would probably have been provoked *to take away both their Place and Nation*. What then should our *Lord* do? Should he make his Escape from his Enemies by perpetual Miracles? But how then should he fulfil his Ministry? Should he call for *Legions of Angels* to defend him? But such Methods were no way agreeable to the Nature and Design of his *Gospel*. Besides, he had as much to fear from his Friends, as from his Enemies. Every Act of Power he could have exercised, to elude, or defeat the Rage of his Adversaries, would have only served to confirm the Prejudices of his Disciples. The People, on the least Encouragement, would have been ready to blow the Trumpet, and cry—*To your Tents, O Israel*. How then should he have been heard amidst the Rage of popular Tumults? How should he have enforced the Practice of true Piety and Virtue, and taught Men to believe in a spiritual and suffering *Messiah*? \* *He did not therefore strive, nor*

\* Matt. xii. 19.

*cry,*

cry, nor did any Man hear his Voice in the Streets. He chose to instil these Principles into Men's Minds by silent and gentle Degrees ; and, though he frequently gave plain Intimations that he was the *Christ*, yet he took Care to do it in such a Manner, as might neither give Offence to the Superior Powers, nor too great Encouragement to the Hasteſſes and Zeal of his own Disciples. Many, we are told, believed in his Name ; but he knew what was in Man ; he knew their inward Sentiments, what Notions they had conceived of the *Meffiah*, and what Kind of Belief they had entertained. And therefore he did not commit himself unto them ; he could not trust them, while under such Prepoſſeſſions, and therefore carefully avoided doing, or ſaying any thing, which might give them any Encouragement, or Occasion, to raise Disturbances on his Account.

<sup>1</sup> During our Saviour's stay at *Jerusalem*, at the Time of this Paſſover, *Nicodemus*, a *Pharisee*, and a Ruler of the *Jews*, came to him by Night. This noble Person was convinced by the Miracles, which *Jesus* had wrought, that he was a Teacher come from God, and therefore came to him for farther Satisfaction : But <sup>2</sup> as the Jewish Rulers began already to be jealous both of *John*, and of *Jesus*, he did not care openly to appear a Favourer of his, and

<sup>1</sup> Joh. iii. 1, &c.      <sup>2</sup> See Joh. iii. 25.      iv. 1.      Matt. xxi. 25.

therefore

therefore came to him by Night. Had Jesus been either an Impostor, or Enthusiast, he would have diligently improved such an Opportunity, and taken all possible Care to retain, and secure so considerable a Profelyte. Instead of this, we find him discoursing to this *Jewish Ruler*, in such a Manner as was most likely to discourage, and offend him. As this is the first Discourse recorded of our *Saviour*, it may merit our particular Attention. *Nicodemus* begins with a frank Acknowledgement of his divine Power and Mission—*Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God; for no Man can do these Miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* He expected (we may presume) that our *Lord* would as freely have declared who he was, and what were his Pretensions. But *Jesus knew what was in Man;* he knew his timorous temper, and the gross Notions he had entertained of the *Messiah's Kingdom.* He would not therefore *commit himself unto him,* but gives him a discouraging Answer—*Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* This Answer may possibly seem at first Sight foreign to the Purpose; but on due Consideration it will appear very proper and pertinent. *The Kingdom of God* was a known Phrase among the *Jews* for the State of Things under the *Messiah.* *Nicodemus*, having seen the *Miracles* which *Jesus* did, expected in him to find the *Messiah.*

*Messiah.* This was the Intention of his coming to him, and this the Purport of his Discourse. Our *Lord* tells him, that he must not expect any Share in the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, except he were born again, designing thereby both to shew the spiritual Nature of his Kingdom, and to reprove *Nicodemus*, as well on account of his carnal Notions, <sup>b</sup> as his coming to him in this private and clandestine Manner. The Purport of this our *Lord's* Answer may not unfitly be thus expressed—You say right that *I am a Teacher come from God*; but you will not find in me such a *Messiah* as you expect; nor are you qualified to be a Partaker in the Kingdom of the *Messiah*: Before you can hope to be a Sharer in the Privileges belonging to *Christ's* Followers, you must be *born again*, become quite a new Man, divest yourself of all Vices, correct the gross errors you have entertained, and be prepared fully to obey his Precepts, and openly profess your Faith in him. As this was to *Nicodemus* an unexpected Answer, so he did not comprehend the Meaning of it, nor understand what *new Birth* our Saviour talked of. Our *Lord* therefore farther tells him, that it was a spiritual *Birth* he meant;

<sup>b</sup> It is remarkable that in both the other Places of this Gospel, where *Nicodemus* is mentioned, this Circumstance of his coming to *Jesus by Night*, is taken notice of. See Joh. vii. 50—xix. 39.

that

that, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he could not enter into the Kingdom of God; that we ought not to question the Reality of this *new Birth*, because we could not explain, or comprehend the Manner of it; that we could not explain the Cause of many natural Effects, as for instance, we could not tell whence the Wind cometh, nor whither it goeth, though we heard the Sound, and felt the Effects of it; and so in like manner we might discern the Fruits and Effects of this *spiritual Birth*, though the Manner of the Spirit's Operation we could not discern, or comprehend. Nicodemus still expressing his Surprise at this Kind of Doctrine, Jesus answered and said unto him—*Art thou a Master of Israel, and knowest not these Things?* Our Lord had hitherto expressed himself according to the Notions and Manner of speaking familiar among the Jews.  
<sup>1</sup> It was usual among the Jews to receive Proselytes by Baptism, and to esteem such Proselytes as *new-born*, and entered into a quite new State of Life. Our Lord therefore adds—*If I have told you earthly things* (i. e. if I have taught you in a Manner agreeable to your own Ways of speaking and thinking) *and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* (i. e. if I speak to you of things above your Comprehension, remote from, or repugnant to your Conceptions). He proceeds to dis-

<sup>1</sup> See Hammond Annot.

course of some of these heavenly Things. And here we may observe, that the Doctrines which our *Lord* here advances, are all of them particularly pointed at the false Notions of the *Jews* with regard to the *Messiah*. They expected a temporal *Messiah*; he preaches to them a spiritual *Messiah*. \* They expected that *Christ* should abide for ever; he tells *Nicodemus*, that *the Son of Man must*<sup>1</sup> be lifted up, as *Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness*. They expected their *Messiah* would instate them in temporal Grandeur and Dominion; our *Lord* promises to those who believe in him *everlasting Life*. They thought that the *Messiah* was to be the *Saviour* of the *Jews* only, exclusive of all others, and was to make War upon, and destroy the rest of Mankind; our *Lord* teaches, that *God so loved the World*<sup>m</sup> (*πν κόσμον*, the whole Race of Mankind, or perhaps particularly the *Gentile World*) *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life*; for *God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World; but that the World through him might be saved*. Lastly, he here sets forth the Cause of the *Jews* Incredulity—*They loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil*. And I cannot but think that this Observation, which our

\* See *Grotii Annot.* and *Joh. xii. 32, &c.*      <sup>1</sup> That the Word *ὑψωθῆναι* signifies peculiarly being *lifted up* on the Cross, is evident from the Comparison with *Moses's Serpent*, and will be shewn more fully hereafter.      <sup>m</sup> See *Grotii Annot.*

*Lord* so much enforces, and with which he closes his Discourse, carries with it a tacit Reproval of *Nicodemus*, who was afraid to own him openly by *Day-light*, and therefore *came to him by Night*. It may be farther observed, that the main Drift of this Discourse of our *Lord* is to point out himself for the *Messiah*—*We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen*—*No Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven*. He intimates that he is the *Son of God*—*God sent his Son into the World*—*He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the Only-begotten Son of God*. And yet he avoids declaring himself the *Christ* in express Terms, or saying any thing, which might give *Nicodemus* any Encouragement, or Occasion to mistake him for a temporal Prince. On the contrary, he takes Care to inform him, that his *Kingdom* was of a spiritual Nature, and that the strictest Holiness and Purity of Manners was necessary in every one, who would become his Disciple. *He was sent into the World, that whosoever believeth in him should have everlasting Life*—*Except a Man be born again of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*. The Reason that Men rejected the *Light*, which was come into the *World*, was, *because their Deeds were evil*—*But he that doeth Truth, cometh to the Light*.

last Thing I would here remark is, that though this Discourse was probably little understood at the Time of its Delivery, yet (like many other of our Saviour's Speeches) it contains in it several important Doctrines, which would become more intelligible to his Disciples, when the Scheme of Christianity should come to be more fully unfolded. The Sacrament of *Baptism* is here alluded to; the Necessity of Divine Grace, the *Divinity* of our *Saviour*, his Crucifixion, and the Redemption of all Mankind by his Death, are plainly here discoverable. What Effect this Discourse had upon *Nicodemus* is not particularly recorded. He probably still continued in Suspence, surprized at our *Lord's* Manner of discoursing, but still believing him a Teacher come from God.<sup>n</sup> We find him to the last a secret Favourer of our *Lord*, but not choosing openly to declare himself.

• After the Feast of the *Passover* was over, Jesus with his Disciples, went into *Judea*, and there continued some Time. There is no Account upon Record of our Saviour's Transactions during this Interval, <sup>p</sup> only that he *baptized* a great Number of Disciples, more than *John* had done before him. He did not indeed *baptize* himself, with his own Hands, but by the Ministry of his Disciples. This soon gave the Alarm to the *Pbarisees*: <sup>q</sup> They had rejected the

<sup>n</sup> Joh. vii. 50—xix. 39. <sup>o</sup> Joh. iii. 22. <sup>p</sup> Joh. iv. 1, 2.

<sup>q</sup> Luk. vii. 30. Matt. xxi. 25.

*Baptism of John*, and were offended at his Preaching: When therefore they heard that the *Disciples of Jesus* were still more numerous, this must necessarily give them still greater Offence. This made it unsafe for *Jesus* to continue any longer so near *Jerusalem*,<sup>1</sup> and therefore he chose to retire again into *Galilee*.

\* Intending for *Galilee*, his Way was through *Samaria*. And here at *Jacob's Well near the City of Sichar*, he enters into discourse with a *Woman of Samaria*, who came there to draw water, while his *Disciples were gone into the City to buy Meat*.<sup>2</sup> It was usual with our *Lord* to raise Matter of Instruction, and spiritual Discourse, from incidental Occurrences, or from Objects which occasionally presented themselves. From the *Well* before him, and the Circumstance of the *Woman's coming to draw Water* there, he takes Occasion to represent his Doctrine and Grace under the Image of *living Water*, springing up into everlasting *Life*. When his *Disciples* brought him *Meat*, he answered—*My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me*. And from the Prospect of the *Fields* covered with Corn, he takes Occasion to discourse of the *Harvest of the Gospel*. Our *Lord* farther discovers himself to this *Woman*, by shewing himself privy to the secret Lewdness of her *Life*: He told her that *she had bad five Huf-*

<sup>1</sup> Joh. iv. 3. Matt. iv. 12. Mar. i. 14. <sup>2</sup> Joh. iv. 4, &c. <sup>3</sup> See *Jortin's Disc.* p. 200. Sir I. Newton's Observ. on Proph. p. 148.

bands, but that *he whom she now had was not her Husband*. What the particular Circumstances of this *Woman's Life* were, we know not; but we may justly conclude that the Discovery which our *Lord* here made was something very striking and extraordinary, as it immediately brought her to a fair Confession, and convinced not only her, but many others, that he was a *Prophet*. *The Woman perceiving our Lord to be a Prophet*, takes Occasion to ask his Opinion of "the grand Question between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*, whether *Mount Gerizim, or Jerusalem was the Place of Worship*. As this was a serious and important Question, our *Lord* gives her a plain and full Answer to it: He tells her that *the Time is coming*, when this Distinction of Places shall cease, *when they shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father*; which Words, as they signify that no one Place shall be peculiarly appropriated to *God's Worship*, so they seem to be prophetical of the approaching Destruction of both these Temples. Our *Lord* proceeds to answer the main Question, and shews that in the Dispute between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, the *Jews* were in the right—*Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for Salvation is of the Jews*. He goes on to teach that this Dispute was now of little Consequence, for a Reformation would soon be begun, and a *Worship*

\* See *Grotii Annot. Lightfoot Harm.*

introduced different from, and superior to, both that of the *Samaritans*, and that of the *Jews*; a *Worship*, not consisting in outward Observances, but in the lifting up the Heart, and Dedication of the Soul and Spirit to God; such a *Worship*, as was agreeable to the Nature of *God*; for *God is a Spirit*; and they that worship him, must worship him in *Spirit, and in Truth*. These Doctrines being above this *Woman's* Comprehension, she replied—I know that *Messias* cometh; when he is come, he will tell us all things. *Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he.*\* This Declaration of our *Saviour* is very remarkable: On this *Woman's* declaring her Expectation of the *Messiah*, he tells her in plain and express Words that he is the Person—Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ λαλῶν οὐ—This is what we find him on all other Occasions carefully avoiding; nor did he for some Time after open himself so freely, either to the *Jews*, or even to his own *Disciples*; nor were any of his Disciples present, when he made this Declaration to the Woman. This might seem strange, did there not appear a Reason for it from what has been already observed: There was not the same Danger here of creating publick Disturbances: *The Samaritans had no Dealings with the Jews*; nor was there any Reason to fear they should make an Insurrection, and attempt to set up him, a *Jew*, for their *King*: Nor

\* See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 80, &c.

was there among them any Jealousy, or evil Disposition towards him, or any Danger of their giving Information against him, either to the *Jewish Rulers*, or the *Roman Governors*. Our *Lord* therefore, who omitted no proper Opportunity of declaring himself, here in express Words tells this Woman, that *he was the Christ*; and we find afterwards, that other *Samaritans*, were convinced by his Doctrine, that *he was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World*. While he was yet talking with the *Woman*, his *Disciples* came from the City with Provisions: Jesus told them *he had Meat to eat which they knew not of*: They expressing their Wonder, he replied, that *his Meat was to do the Will of him that sent him, and to finish his Work*. And now, I suppose, the *Samaritans* coming from the City might appear in View; Jesus therefore adds—*Say not ye, there are yet four Months, and then cometh Harvest?* (and then pointing to the *Samaritans*) *bewold I say unto you, Lift up your Eyes, and look on the Fields, for they are white already to Harvest*. Under the same Image he proceeds to teach them, that this *Harvest* was in such Readiness, Men would be so well disposed by his Preaching, and by the Oracles of the Prophets, that they should find their Labour easy, and their Reward *everlasting Life*. \* And so they afterwards found it, particularly in this very Place. This Conference of our *Lord* with the *Woman* of

\* *Acta viii. 6.*

*Samaria,*

*Samaria*, the stay he made with the *Samaritans*, and the Hints he here gives in this Discourse, must doubtless appear strange to his *Jewish Disciples*, but were designed to wean them from their local Prejudices, and may be looked upon as some of the first Openings of that Doctrine which was to be gradually unfolded, and in due Time more fully discovered, <sup>r</sup> that the *Gentiles should be Fellow-Heirs, and of the same Body, and Partakers of his Promise in Christ by the Gospel.*

<sup>z</sup> From *Samaria* our *Lord* pursued his Journey into *Galilee*, where he was favourably received by the *Galileans*, who had seen all things that he did at *Jerusalem at the Feast*.

From this Time we have a more full Account of our *Saviour's Preaching*, and *Miracles*. St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke* here begin their Account of his Ministry. <sup>a</sup> They tell us that he returned in the Power of the Spirit into *Galilee*, and came preaching the *Gospel of the Kingdom of God*, and saying, *The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel*. Here again it may seem strange that our *Lord* should not speak in more plain Terms. One would think it was now Time he should publickly open his Commission, and declare positively that he was the *Christ*.

<sup>r</sup> Eph. iii. 6.      <sup>z</sup> Joh. iv. 43, &c.      <sup>a</sup> Luk. iv. 14.  
Mar. i. 14, 15. Matt. iv. 17.

Instead

Instead of this he contents himself with using such Language, as his Fore-runner had used before him, and such as one would think only proper for his Fore-runner to use—*The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*—But we have already seen that, while the Jews were possessed with the Expectation of a temporal *Messiah*, he could not publickly declare himself the *Messiah*, without great Danger of raising popular Commotions, and thereby defeating his main Design: He therefore thought it sufficient to declare, that *the Time was fulfilled*, and *the Kingdom of God was at Hand*—a Declaration, which might raise in Men's Minds an Expectation of the *Messiah*, but could give no Occasion, or Encouragement, to any one to raise Disturbances; while by his Doctrine he exhorted Men to *repent*, and formed their Minds to the strictest Purity and Holiness; and by his wonderful Miracles continually convinced well-disposed Persons that he was the *Christ*, or at least prepared their Minds for the Reception of this Truth, which was hereafter to be more openly taught, after his Resurrection and Ascension. <sup>b</sup> It has been already observed that *the Kingdom of God*, or *the Kingdom of Heaven*, was a known Phrase among the Jews for the State of Things under the *Messiah*. They had learnt from <sup>c</sup> the Prophet *Daniel*, and other Places of *Scripture*, that

<sup>a</sup> P. 63.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. vii. 13, 14.

the Son of Man should come, and there should be given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him. Nor were they mistaken in their Expectations. Our Lord was this Son of Man; and a Kingdom was to be given him, though different in its Nature and Commencement from what the Jews expected. <sup>a</sup> He was born King of the Jews: <sup>c</sup> To this Truth throughout his whole Life he bare Witness: This was the Gospel, or glad Tidings, that he preached: But then <sup>f</sup> this Kingdom, though already in some Sense begun,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. ii. 2.      <sup>c</sup> Joh. xviii. 37.

<sup>f</sup> The Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, signifies (as we have seen) the Kingdom of the Messiah; but as the Messiah was not all at once invested with his Regalities, but was to be by several Steps advanced to Dominion and Glory, so the Kingdom of God in Scripture, with regard to the Time of its Commencement, bears different Senses. In one Sense the Kingdom of God commenced from our Lord's Birth, or first Entrance on his Ministry: Thus Matt. xii. 28. our Lord tells the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God was come unto them; and again, Luk. xvii. 21. the Kingdom of God is within, or among you. Another Commencement of this Kingdom was at our Lord's Resurrection, and Ascension, when all Power was given to him in Heaven and Earth: Thus Luk. xix. 12. our Lord compares himself to a Nobleman, who was going into a far Country to receive for himself a Kingdom. Again, as our Lord most remarkably displayed his Regal Power in the Punishment of the Jews, and Destruction of Jerusalem, his Kingdom is often dated from thence: Thus Matt. xvi. 28. he tells the Jews that there were some standing there, which should not taste of Death, till they saw the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom. Lastly, there is

still

yet was not to commence in *Glory* and *Dominion*, till after his Resurrection, and Ascension. And therefore with the greatest Propriety, as well as Prudence, he preached, saying—*The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand.*

During our Lord's Abode in Galilee we find him *preaching*, and *working Miracles* every where, openly and publickly. <sup>g</sup> *He went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Disease among the People.* His Miracles were many, great, and unexceptionable, all of them of the beneficial Kind. <sup>h</sup> *They brought unto him all sick People that were taken with divers Diseases, and Torments, and he healed them.* The most inveterate Distempers, and those which were commonly thought incurable by any Art, he instantly cured. <sup>i</sup> *The Paralytick,* <sup>k</sup> *the Lepers,* <sup>l</sup> *and those at the Point of Death he restored:* And this he did without the Use of any natural Means, <sup>m</sup> by a Touch, <sup>n</sup> or a Word's speaking. *He healed the Noble-*  
*still another Commencement of Christ's Kingdom yet to come at the Day of Judgment, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing, and his Kingdom.* Matt. xxv. 31. 2 Tim. iv. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. iv. 23. Mar. i. 39. Luk. iv. 44. <sup>b</sup> Matt. iv. 24. Mar. i. 32, &c. Luk. iv. 40. <sup>i</sup> Matt. ix. 2, &c. Mar. ii. 3, &c. Luk. v. 18, &c. <sup>k</sup> Mar. i. 40, &c. Luk. v. 12, &c. <sup>l</sup> Joh. iv. 46, &c. <sup>m</sup> Matt. viii. 3. 15. Luk. iv. 40. Mar. i. 41. Luk. v. 13. <sup>n</sup> Matt. ix. 6, &c. Mar. ii. 11, &c. Luk. v. 24, &c.

man's

man's Son at Capernaum, without ever seeing him, only by speaking the Word. <sup>o</sup> He also cast out the Spirits with his Word, and the Devils came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. He relieved all Persons who came to him without Exception, the Nobleman's Son, Peter's Wife's Mother; all that had any sick with divers Diseases, brought them unto him, and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. His Miracles were wrought in their <sup>p</sup> Cities, and in their <sup>q</sup> Synagogues, before great Multitudes of People, <sup>r</sup> when there were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law sitting by, which were come out of every Town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem, who were ready to raise Objections, and capable of making the strictest Enquiry. And great was the Efficacy of his Preaching and Works. <sup>s</sup> He was glorified of all; <sup>t</sup> and the Fame of him went out into every Place of the Country round about. <sup>u</sup> Great Multitudes of People every where attended him, and stayed him that he should not depart from them. <sup>v</sup> And they were all amazed, and glorified God, and his Enemies among the rest were amazed, and filled with Fear, and could find nothing to object to the Truth of his Miracles.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. viii. 16. Mar. i. 34. Luk. iv. 41. <sup>p</sup> Mar. i. 33.

<sup>q</sup> Mar. i. 23, &c. Luk. iv. 33, &c. <sup>r</sup> Luk. v. 17.

<sup>s</sup> Luk. iv. 15. <sup>t</sup> Luk. iv. 37. Mar. i. 28. <sup>u</sup> Matt. iv. 25. Luk. iv. 42. <sup>v</sup> Matt. ix. 8. Mar. ii. 12. Luk. v. 26.

When

\* When our *Lord* first came from *Judea*, he passed by his own City *Nazareth*, as well knowing the Prejudices they had conceived against him, and went and preached in other Parts of *Galilee*. <sup>7</sup> But now, his Fame being spread abroad, and his Mission sufficiently attested, he, being unwilling to leave his Countrymen's Conversion unattempted, came to *Nazareth*: Here, as his Custom was, he went into the *Synagogue* on the *Sabbath Day*, and was employed by the Minister, or *Ruler of the Synagogue*, to read and expound a Portion of the *Scripture*. It appears from this Circumstance, that he was now looked upon as an extraordinary Person; this Office would otherwise have been scarcely assigned to a Person of his Birth and Education. The Miracles wrought in their Neighbourhood had had some Effect upon them; we find they paid great Attention to him, and were in high Expectation of seeing some Miracle done by him, as they had heard done at *Caper-naum*. Our *Lord* therefore took this Opportunity of preaching to them the *Gospel of the Kingdom*. He opened the *Book*, and whether accidentally, or designedly, found <sup>2</sup> a *Prophecy of Isaiab*, which he applied to himself. He began to say unto them—*This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears*; and so went on (as we may suppose) farther to explain

\* Joh. iv. 43, 44. See *Hammond* and *Grotius*. <sup>7</sup> Luk. iv. 16, &c. <sup>2</sup> Isai. lxi. 1, 2. It was most probably the Lesson of the Day.

this remarkable *Prophecy*. I doubt not but this *Prophecy* was then generally known and allowed to belong to the *Messiah*. To tell them therefore that *this Scripture was that Day fulfilled*, was a very strong Intimation that he was the Person: And the *Nazarenes all bare him Witness*; they could not but see, and allow, that his Works and his Preaching answered this prophetical Description of *Isaiah*; and they could not but wonder at the gracious *Words*, which proceeded out of his Mouth. But there was still in them an evil Heart of Unbelief: They knew his *Parents* and *Kindred*, and could not believe that *Christ* could spring from so mean a Stock: They were divided therefore between two Opinions, their Minds were variable, and their Behaviour inconsistent: They expected to see some Miracles done amongst them (as had been done in their Neighbourhood) and some peculiar Regard shewn to themselves as his Countrymen. But our *Lord*, who knew their Thoughts, upbraids them with their Unbelief, shews from Examples in *Scripture*, that *God's Favours* were free and gratuitous, and not always conferred on those who thought they had most Reason to expect them. And, as the *Jews* had great Notions of national and local Prerogatives, our *Lord* hereby designed to correct these Notions, and to intimate the calling of the *Gentiles*. But they were highly offended at this Discourse. The Disappointment in seeing no Miracle done by him,

him, and the Disregard he seemed to express for them, so enraged them, that they broke up their Meeting, *rose up, and thrust him out of the City*, and attempted to *cast him down headlong from the Brow of the Hill*: But he miraculously made his Escape from them, *and went his Way*. This Behaviour of the *Nazarenes* fully justifies our *Saviour's* Conduct toward them. It may well be questioned whether any Miracles he could have wrought would have been sufficient to over-rule the Prejudices they had conceived against him: Or, if they had, this might possibly have driven them into as violent an Extreme the other way. Such Profelytes would have been more likely to have taken up Arms in Support of their Countryman, than to have listened to the Doctrines of Humility and Meekness, which he came to teach; and therefore wisely did our *Lord* choose rather to offend than encourage them.

\* *Jesus* therefore left his own City, and went and dwelt in *Capernaum*: <sup>b</sup> And here in their *Synagogue* he cast out *an unclean Spirit* out of a Person possessed. A Notion has been lately advanced, and ascribed to the learned Mr. *Mede*, that the *Dæmoniacks* mentioned in *Scripture* were no other than common *Madmen*, or *Epilepticks*, falsely supposed by the *Jews* to be possessed by *evil Spirits*: But scarcely any of the Instances recorded in *Scripture*

<sup>a</sup> Luk. iv. 31.      <sup>b</sup> Mar. i. 23, &c.      Luk. iv. 33, &c.

will admit of this Interpretation. We need go no farther for Proof of this, than the Passage before us. The Confession of our *Lord*, which this Person made, could scarcely come from one under the Fit of an Epilepsy; nor could the Convulsions, which he afterwards suffered, be the Effect of common Madness: Much less, on either Supposition, can we account for the great Surprize, and Amazement, which all present expressed: What cause of Wonder could it be, that an Epileptick from a Paroxysm, or a Madman from a raving Fit, should return again to his Senses? Or what Proof would it be of a Cure? But, what ought with all *Christians* to be most decisive, is, that the *Evangelists* expressly assert, that the Man had a *Spirit of an unclean Devil*, and that the *unclean Spirit came out of him*; and our *Saviour* himself plainly directs his Speech to the *Spirit—Hold thy Peace, and come out of him*. Whatever Caution our *Lord* might use in speaking the Truth, or whatever Condescension he might shew to the Prejudices of the *Jews*, it cannot be conceived, nor can any Instance be produced, where either he, or his *Apostles*, said any thing to confirm them in any superstitious Error. This Man therefore being possessed by *an unclean Spirit*, it is no way strange that, when our *Lord* came into the *Synagogue*, this *Spirit* should be alarmed and troubled at his Presence: He expresses his Fear, and is forced to acknow-

ledge his Power and Authority—<sup>"Ex—Ab!"</sup>—τί καὶ  
καὶ—why should you interfere with us and trouble us,  
thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy  
us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God.  
• The same Fears on other Occasions the Devils  
expressed at our Lord's Presence; they believed and  
trembled. But Jesus chose rather that his Mission  
should be attested by shewing his Power over the  
Devils, than by any Testimony he could receive  
from them: He therefore rebuked this Spirit, saying  
—Hold thy Peace, and come out of him: And imme-  
diately the Spirit, having first thrown the Man into  
strong Convulsions, with a hideous Noise came out  
of him, leaving him unburt. This Miracle filled  
all Persons present with Amazement. Persons in  
this Condition were generally thought incurable  
by Art: There were indeed those who pretended  
to exorcise these Evil Spirits, by Charms and In-  
cantations, or by Invocation of the Name of the  
true God. But our Lord, without any of the usual  
Forms of Exorcism, in his own Name, and by his

<sup>c</sup> See Matt. viii. 29. Mar. iii. 11. Luk. iv. 41.

Those, who assert that the *Gospel Dæmoniacks* were no other  
than common Madmen, would do well to inform us, how all  
these Madmen came to know that Jesus was the Christ: Our  
Lord had not yet published this Truth, not even to his own  
Disciples; and yet these *Dæmoniacks* in general knew and ac-  
knowledged it. See Luk. iv. 41. Mar. i. 34. Matt. viii.  
29. Mar. v. 7. Luk. viii. 28. Mar. iii. 11.

own Authority, commanded this Devil to come out of the Man—the People observed—*ὅτι καὶ ἐξουσίαν  
ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐπιτάσσει, οὐ ὑπακούεται αὐτῷ.* This Miracle was also attended with some very extraordinary Circumstances. The Agonies the Spirit was in at our *Lord's* Presence, the Confession it made of him, and the Manner of its departing, bore strong Attestation to our *Lord's* Divine Power. This Person might possibly appear before like a common Madman; but the great Cry the Devil made, and the Convulsions he threw the Person into, when Jesus commanded him to come out, were strong Proofs both that a Devil had possessed him, and that he was now departed from him. Well therefore might *all be amazed, saying, What thing is this? What new Doctrine is this?* and well might this extend his Fame through all the Country round about.

Another Malady generally thought incurable by Art, was the *Leprosy.* <sup>4</sup> This the Jews looked upon as the Finger of God, a Disease peculiarly of his sending, and removing, and thought it not lawful for a Physician so much as to attempt the Cure of it: <sup>5</sup> And yet this our *Lord* cured only by a *Touch:* And he did it in the same authoritative manner in which he healed the *Dæmoniack.* *He put forth his Hand, and touched him, saying, I will,*

<sup>4</sup> See *Hammond* on Matt. viii.      <sup>5</sup> Matt. viii. 2, &c.  
Mar. i. 40, &c.      Luk. v. 12, &c.

*be thou clean. And immediately the Leprosy departed from him.* <sup>f</sup> *Lepers were required by the Law to dwell alone by themselves, apart from other Men, and not to enter into Cities, or Places of publick Concourse:* And therefore this Man seems to have been guilty of an Irregularity in coming into the *City after Jesus:* But his Faith and Humility, and the sad Condition he was in, moved our *Lord's* Compassion: <sup>g</sup> *However, though he would not refuse to relieve him, yet he took all possible Care to give no Offence: He most earnestly charged him to tell no Man,* and sent him in all Haste immediately away—καὶ ἐμετρήσας αὐτῷ εἶπεν εἰδέτε αὐτὸν. The many Miracles he had already wrought had drawn together a great Concourse of People, and raised in all Men a high Opinion of him. The Fame therefore of such a Miracle as this, might have driven the People, already heated, to some Extravagance. Other Persons in the same Condition might have resorted to him for Cure, and broken through the Bounds assigned them: This must have occasioned great Confusion and Disturbance; and he himself would have been in

<sup>f</sup> Lev. xiii. 45, 46.

<sup>g</sup> Our *Lord* doubtless healed many *Lepers* (see Matt. xi. 5.) and gave Power to his *Apostles* to do the like (see Matt. x. 8.) but there is but one particular Instance besides this recorded in the Gospels. Luk. xvii. 12. These stood afar off, and did not come near our *Lord*; and these too he commanded to *shew themselves to the Priests.*

Danger of being accused as a Breaker of the Law. We find accordingly, that when *the Matter* was published and blazed abroad, he found it necessary to retire into *desert Places*, and could no more openly enter into the City. Prudently therefore did our Lord charge this Leper to tell no Man, but go, and shew himself to the Priest, and offer for his cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a Testimony unto them. These last Words are capable of different Senses. The Meaning may be, that this would be a Proof to the Jews that he, and his Followers, carefully observed the Law; or our Lord might mean, that the Sentence of the Priest, and Acceptance of the Gift, would be a full *Testimony* and Proof of the Reality of the Cure, and Certainty of the Miracle. And possibly for this Reason also our Lord might be unwilling the Miracle should be divulged, till it was thus authentically attested. But this Man, notwithstanding he was so strictly charged, published and blazed abroad the Matter, which obliged our Lord to retire into *desert Places*.

<sup>h</sup> Jesus, after some Days spent in Retirement and Prayer in the Wilderness, returned again to Capernaum. His coming was immediately noised abroad, and straightway many were gathered together, and amongst the rest there were Pharisees and Doc-

\* Matt. ix. 1, 2, &c.    Mar. ii. 1, &c.    Luk. v. 17, &c.

tors of the Law, which were come out of every Town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem. While to these he preached the Word, they brought to him a Man sick of the Palsey, lying on a Bed, and not being able to come nigh unto him for the Press,<sup>1</sup> they let him down through the Top of the House. This Man Jesus healed by a Word's speaking, in a Way still more authoritative, and more expressive of his divine Power, than in the former Cases: *When he saw their Faith, he said unto the Sick of the Palsey—Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee.* This Speech gave Offence to the Scribes and Pharisees: They thought it no less than Blasphemy for any one to pretend to forgive Sins, but God only. But though they kept their Thoughts to themselves, Jesus shewed himself privy to what passed in their Hearts: *He perceived their Thoughts, and said unto them—Why Reason ye these things in your Hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the Sick of the Palsey, thy Sins be forgiven, or to say, Arise, take up thy Bed, and walk?* And then speaking the Word, he immediately healed the Paralick, and from thence taught them to infer, that the Son of Man had Power on Earth to forgive Sins, thus setting forth his Divine Authority in such a Manner, that they could not lay hold of it, or make any Exception against it. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and

<sup>1</sup> See Shaw's Travels, p. 277.

were filled with Fear, saying, *We have seen strange things to day.*

\* Our Lord, during his Abode this Year in Galilee, called several Disciples, *Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, the Sons of Zebedee, and<sup>1</sup> Matthew the Publican.* These had some of them, most probably all, been his Disciples before; but now they were called upon, not only to believe in him, but to forsake their Trades and Employments, their House and Kindred, and be his constant Followers and Companions, that they might be Witnesses to the World of his Miracles and his Doctrine. The Call of *Peter, Andrew, James, and John,* was accompanied with a miraculous Draught of Fishes. *They had toiled all the Night, and taken nothing;* but at his Word they let down the Net, and enclosed such a Multitude of Fishes, as filled their two Ships, so that they began to sink: They expressing their Astonishment, he bade them follow him, and he would make them Fishers of Men.

\* Matt. iv. 18, &c. Mar. i. 16, &c. Luk. v. 1, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 9. Mar. ii. 14. Luk. v. 27, 28.

## C H A P. IV.

**N**EXT Year, at the Feast of the *Passover*, Jesus went again to *Jerusalem*, where he healed the *impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda*.<sup>m</sup> Various have been the Opinions of learned Men about the Cures said to be wrought at this *Pool of Bethesda*. I am afraid we have scarce Light enough to determine any thing herein with any Certainty. The *Evangelist* mentions it only incidentally, by way of Introduction to his Narration of the Cure wrought by our *Saviour*. All therefore that concerns my present Purpose to observe, is, that this poor *Man* had laboured under *an Infirmity thirty and eight Years*, and was now waiting, and had long waited in vain, at this *Pool* for a Cure, which he expected from some Virtue in these *Waters*. Our *Lord* here found him, and compassionating his Case, healed him immediately, only by a Word's speaking: He spake with Authority—*Rise, take up thy Bed, and walk*—And immediately the *Man* was made whole, and took up his *Bed*, and walked. The *Evangelist* here remarks, that *on the same Day was the Sabbath*. Our *Lord* seems often purposely to have chosen this Day

<sup>m</sup> Joh. v. 1, &c.      \* See the Commentators, and the Bp. of Rochester's and Dr. Stebbing's Answers to *Woolston*.

for the exertion of his miraculous Powers, probably with Design to correct the superstitious Notions which the Jews had entertained of the Observance of the Sabbath. <sup>o</sup> He had before at *Capernaum* cast out an unclean Spirit on the Sabbath-Day: <sup>p</sup> He healed the *Woman, which had a Spirit of Infirmitiy eighteen Years, on the Sabbath-Day:* <sup>q</sup> And on this Day he healed the *Man who was born blind.* And sometimes he justified his conduct herein by such unanswerable Reasons, as confounded his Adversaries. <sup>r</sup> When in the *Synagogue* he saw a *Man, which had a withered Hand,* he first asked them, whether it was lawful to do Good on the Sabbath-Days, or to do Evil? to save Life, or to kill? <sup>s</sup> And he farther argued that they themselves would take Pains to save the Life of a *Sheep on the Sabbath-Day,* and that a *Man is better than a Sheep, wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-Days.* And then, when he found they could answer nothing to such cogent Reasons, he healed the *Man.* In like manner, in the Case before us, he not only healed this *impotent Man on the Sabbath-Day,* but commanded him to *take up his Bed and walk.* <sup>t</sup> This was contrary to the Law, and punishable with Death: But our *Lord* being a

<sup>o</sup> Mar. i. 21, &c.      <sup>p</sup> Luk. xiii. 10, &c.      <sup>q</sup> Joh. ix. 14.      <sup>r</sup> Matt. xii. 9, &c.      Mar. iii. 1, &c.      Luk. vi. 6, &c.      <sup>s</sup> See also Luk. xiii. 15, &c.      <sup>t</sup> See Jer. xvii. 21.      Num. xv. 32, &c.      *Lightsfoot Harmon.*

Prophet, had Authority to dispense with such kind of Laws, according to the Notions of the Jews themselves : He therefore seems to have given this Command to the Man, both to correct their superstitious Notions, and also to make the Miracle more publickly taken Notice of, and give himself an Opportunity of asserting his Mission. The Jews immediately took Offence, when they saw this Man *carrying his Bed on the Sabbath-Day* : He in his own Justification, told them, that the Person who made him whole, bade him *take up his Bed, and walk* : But who this Person was he could not inform them, Jesus having, to avoid the Concourse of People, *conveyed himself away*, immediately after he had wrought this Miracle. However soon after, Jesus met this Man in the Temple, and said unto him, *Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*. The Man now discovering that it was Jesus who had made him whole, went and told the Jews. They, instead of being convinced by so notable a Miracle, were offended because it was wrought on the Sabbath-Day : <sup>u</sup> And they made search after him, and thought to arraign him, and punish him capitally for this Offence. He soon appeared before them, and justified what he had done. <sup>w</sup> Dr. Lightfoot is of Op-

<sup>u</sup> οὐδὲν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ σι ταῦτα, νέεται αὐτὸς ἀποκρίνεσθαι.

<sup>w</sup> Lightfoot Harm. p. 670. It is said (v. 15.) that *the Man departed and told the Jews*. It was not therefore the common People,

nion, that Jesus was convened before the *Sanhedrim*, and made the following Defence there in open Court : He *answered them—My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*: The Meaning may be thus expressed—You question me for breach of the *Sabbath*; but God, who is my *Father*, did not so rest from all *Work* on the *Sabbath-Day*, but that ever since he hath done Works of Preservation and Mercy every Day : Why then may not I, his *Son*, do the like without Exception? This only the more enraged the *Jews*. To call God his *Father*, and to claim the like Prerogative with him, was, they thought, to *make himself equal with God*; (and so indeed it was) and therefore they were still more desirous of putting him to Death. Hereupon he asserts his Divine Mission with all Boldness and Freedom, and lays before them the Proofs of it. He tells them, that he pretended to do nothing by his own Power and Authority; but yet had said no more than he could justify; for *the Father* had given *the Son* equal Power and Authority with himself; and that by this Power he should do greater Things than *these*; that *the Dead* should at his Summons, be *raised*: *The Hour is coming, and now is*, (which seems to relate to the

People, (who were doubtless many of them there in the Temple) it must be some particular Persons, probably Persons in Authority, who had questioned this Man for *carrying his Bed*.

*Dead*

Dead he raised to Life again during the Time of his Ministry) when the Dead shall bear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that bear shall live. He tells them that the Father had sent him; that all Men ought to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, and that he that believeth his Word, and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting Life; that the Father had given him Authority to execute Judgment also; and that the Hour was coming, in the which all that were in the Graves should hear his Voice, and come forth, they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation. Finally, for the Proof of his Mission, he refers them to the Testimony of John; to the Testimony of his own Miracles,<sup>x</sup> and of God himself in the Voice from Heaven, and to the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and concludes with a severe Reprof of their Unbelief

\* This I suppose he may allude to v. 37—*And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne Witness of me.* The Words that follow are somewhat obscure, and are very differently interpreted by the Commentators. They may perhaps be best understood as an Objection, in this Manner—You will say, that you never heard this Voice of the Father, nor saw this luminous Appearance—To which the Answer is—*Nor have you his Word abiding in you; for you believe not him whom he sent.* You believed not the Testimony which John gave of this Vision, which you would have done, if you had been rightly disposed to believe the Truth, he being undoubtedly a Teacher sent from God.

and Hardness of Heart. We see here a plain and full Declaration of his Divine Mission. He calls himself *the Son, the Son of God*; he asserts that *the Father sent him*, and lays before them the proper Proofs of his Mission. He seems to have been willing to make an Experiment whether they would receive him or not; at the same time the Drift of his whole Discourse is to declare himself a spiritual *Messiah*. The Powers he ascribes to himself are, the *raising the Dead*, and *judging the World*; and the Rewards he promises to his Followers are *Salvation*, a happy *Resurrection*, and everlasting *Life*. He says nothing of his *Kingdom*, nor does he drop one Word, which might induce the *Jews* to mistake him for their temporal Prince; and, though his whole Discourse tends to declare and prove himself to be the *Christ*, yet he never in express Terms gives himself this Title, or any other which might import temporal Dominion. Add to this, that the Offence given by this Cure wrought on the *Sabbath-Day*, and the severe Rebukes mixed with these Declarations of himself, must tend to alienate the Affections of those whose Minds were wholly set on secular Power, or Profit. We may farther here observe, how our *Lord* takes all Occasions to raise spiritual Instruction, from every Incident and Object that occurred. From his Power exerted in healing this *impotent Man*, he makes an easy Transition to his Power of *raising the Dead*; and from

thence

thence takes Occasion to instruct the Jews in the Doctrine of a general *Resurrection*, and *Future Judgment*.

What Effect this Discourse had upon the Jews we are not told ; only we find by their subsequent Behaviour, that they were highly offended. Probably the Notoriety or Greatness of the Miracle, and the Justness of his Reasonings, to which they could reply nothing, might oblige them to dismiss him. We find he escaped their Rage, and continued still to reprove their superstitious Attachment to outward Observances, and particularly their rigid Notions with regard to the Sabbath.

\* Soon after this, as he was going through the Corn-Fields on the Sabbath-day, his Disciples, being hungry, plucked the Ears of Corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their Hands. They had probably, being employed in Attendance on their Master, neglected to take their usual Meals, and therefore they wanted some such Refreshment. But this gave Offence to some of the Pharisees : This plucking of the Ears, and rubbing out of the Corn, they seem to have looked upon as a kind of Reaping, at least a Work not to be performed on the Sabbath-day. But our Lord justified this Action of his Disciples, First, from the Example of David, who in a like

\* Matt. xii. 1, &c.    Mar. ii. 23, &c.    Luk. vi. 1, &c.

Case of Necessity, eat the *Shew-Bread*, which by the Law was appropriated to be eaten only by the *Priests*: Secondly, from the Example of the *Priests*, who perform all Works that are necessary for the Service of the Temple, though otherwise accounted among such, as are prohibited on the *Sabbath*; and therefore his *Disciples* who were engaged in Attendance on him, might plead the like Exemption: *For (faith he) in this Place is one greater than the Temple.* Here he asserts his divine Authority, but yet in such Terms, as they could not easily lay hold on. And again—*The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-Day*—which Words are somewhat obscure, and possibly intended so to be; but I doubt not but they were designed to intimate, that he had Authority to dispense with any such Ordinances. Lastly, he teaches them that all such Laws are to give way in Cases of Necessity—*But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*

<sup>2</sup> The same Doctrine he taught in one of their *Synagogues*, where he healed a *Man, whose Right Hand was withered.*

These Miracles, one would have thought, might have been sufficient to convince the most incredulous: But strong Prejudices, and Motives of

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 9, &c.      Mar. iii. 1, &c.      Luk. vi. 6, &c.

Interest weighed down the Scale on the other Side. The *Pharisees* saw their Credit and Authority attacked, and their Traditions and Ordinances slighted: *Jesus* was not such a *Messiah* as they looked for; he did not come in that Pomp and Parade which they expected; his Birth and Appearance was mean, no way calculated to answer their ambitious Views and Expectations; they could not expect from him Preferment for themselves, nor Deliverance for their Nation: His Doctrine appeared to them strange, no way agreeable to their preconceived Notions: He treated them with very little Ceremony; he neither flattered their Vanity, nor soothed them in their Prejudices, but on all Occasions freely exposed and rebuked them. His Miracles indeed they could not question, nor could they answer his Arguments: But, as they were strongly prejudiced against them,<sup>a</sup> this served only to fill them with Madness, and enrage them the more against him. <sup>b</sup> They therefore entered into a Confederacy with their Enemies the *Herodians*, and consulted together with them the Means of destroying him. As *Herod* held his Kingdom of the *Romans*, so his Courtiers, and those of his Party were called *Herodians*. These were in the Interest of the *Romans*, and acknowledged their Authority, whereas the

<sup>a</sup> Luk. vi. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xii. 14.

Mar. iii. 6.

Pharisees looked upon the Roman Government as an Usurpation. These Persons could not but look upon any one with a jealous Eye, who was thought to be the *Christ*; and therefore they were ready to enter into an Association with the *Pharisees*, who, though with a different View, sought the Destruction of *Jesus*. Our *Lord*, fearing the Effects of so powerful a Combination, was obliged to take Refuge in Privacy and Retirement. <sup>c</sup> He therefore withdrew himself with his Disciples to the Sea. <sup>d</sup> St. Matthew on this Occasion observes, that by this Means *Isaiah's Prophecy was fulfilled*—<sup>e</sup> Behold my Servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my Soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew Judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any Man bear his Voice in the Streets: A bruised Reed shall he not break, and smoaking Flax shall be not quench, till he send forth Judgment unto Victory. We have here a plain Account of our Saviour's Procedure, and the very same we have before given. The *Pharisees*, the governing Party among the *Jews*, were now highly incensed against him; and the *Herodians*, the Party in the *Roman Interest*, had joined them. Had our *Lord* then continued openly to preach and work Miracles, it must have occasioned publick Disturbances: The *Pharisees* and *Herodians* would soon

<sup>c</sup> Mar. iii. 7.<sup>d</sup> Matt. xii. 17, &c.<sup>e</sup> Is. xlii. 1, &c.

have seized on his Person ; and thoſe who were convinced by his Doctrine and Miracles might possibly have attempted to rescue him. What then should he do ? *He withdrew himself with his Disciples :* He would give no Occasion to popular Commotions : *He did not strive, nor cry, neither was his Voice heard in the Streets.* Turbulence and Strife were neither agreeable to the Nature of his *Gospel*, nor consistent with his great Design of reforming Mankind. He knew the Prejudices and Weakness, both of his Enemies, and his Friends : Those he would not unnecessarily exasperate ; these he would not either disgust, or confirm in their Errors—*He would not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax.* He chose to instil the Doctrines of his Kingdom into Men's Minds by silent and gentle Degrees ; to preach the Word, as they were able to bear it ; and to bring them gradually off from their falſe Notions. And thus at length, *he sent forth Judgment* (מִשְׁפָט) *unto Victory* ; made the *Truth* to triumph ; gained all among the Jews, who were capable of Conviction, and made Way for his *Gospel* to be preached to, and received among the Gentiles. But, though he thus avoided the Rage of his Enemies by Retirement, yet he still continued to preach, and give Proofs of his Mission. He neglected no proper Occasion of doing good, <sup>1</sup> and healed all who came to him :

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 15, 16.

But he chose now to do it in a more private manner, than he had done before. <sup>g</sup> He frequently enjoined the Persons on whom he wrought Cures, *that they should not make him known.* <sup>h</sup> And when, notwithstanding such Prohibition, they published what he had done for them, and Multitudes flocked about him, he retired into *desert Places.*

<sup>i</sup> About this Time, Jesus is supposed to have chosen his *Twelve Apostles* to be assistant to him in preaching the *Gospel.* <sup>k</sup> The Persons he chose were poor and illiterate Men, of mean Birth, and low Education. And such Persons were best adapted to his present Purpose. They were capable of being Witnesses to his Miracles and Doctrine; and yet were not likely to head an Insurrection, or give Occasion, or Encouragement to others to raise Seditions on his Account. Had his *Kingdom* been *of this World*, he would, if possible, have sought out Persons of higher Rank, and better Education, to have acted under him, whose Credit, Authority, and Abilities might have been serviceable in carrying on his Design. But, as he was a *Spiritual Messias*, and as he thought proper to open the Doctrine of his *Kingdom* by Degrees, according as Men were able to bear it, the Choice of such Instruments was wisely and admirably adapted to this

<sup>g</sup> Mar. iii. 12, &c.      <sup>h</sup> Mar. i. 45      Luk. ix. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Matt. x. 1, &c.      Mar. iii. 13, &c.      Luk. vi. 12, &c.

<sup>k</sup> See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 154, &c.

Design. Persons of higher Station, or greater Knowledge, would have been more busy and forward in promoting what they thought their Master's Interest, and advancing his *Kingdom*. They would have been more impatient and inquisitive into the Nature of his *Kingdom*: They would have questioned him more closely, when he would *restore the Kingdom to Israel*; when he himself would ascend the Throne, and what Ways and Measures were to be used towards it. And, when *sent out to preach the Gospel*, such Persons would hardly have been kept from exceeding their Commission, mixing their own Prudence with their Master's Commands, declaring publickly who he was, and taking such Steps as they thought necessary for his Advance-  
ment. And with the Encouragement and Auth-  
ority of such Persons, he would have had more Fol-  
lowers, and those warmer in his Cause: The Peo-  
ple would have been more strongly persuaded that he was their temporal Deliverer and *King*, and rea-  
dier to raise Tumults and Seditions. And possibly,  
for this Reason, St. Paul was, by his Learning,  
Parts, and Warmth of Temper, better fitted for an  
*Apostle* after, than during our *Saviour's Ministry*;  
and therefore, though *a chosen Vessel*, was not by the  
Divine Wisdom called till *after Christ's Resur-  
rection*.

<sup>1</sup> Soon after this, our *Lord* is supposed to have preached his Sermon on the Mount. This excellent Discourse has been fully explained and illustrated by *Christian* Divines. It may be sufficient to our present Purpose to observe, that, as our *Lord* here teaches us the purest, and most exalted Virtue and Piety, so was his Doctrine peculiarly adapted to the Circumstances of those Times. The *Jews*, we know, expected a temporal *King*, and doubtless his Disciples, especially those who were just now advanced to be his more immediate Companions and *Apostles*, began to promise themselves Preferment, and Advancement in his *Kingdom*. But he, instead of flattering their vain Hopes, pronounces a *Blessing* on the Poor and Meek; on those that hunger and thirst after Righteousness; on the merciful and pure in Heart; on the Peace-Makers [not the ambitious and movers of Sedition]; on those that mourn, and are persecuted for Righteousness sake. And he plainly intimates, that his *Disciples* must expect to be reviled and persecuted: He arms them against such Treatment; and promises them a Reward, not on Earth, but in Heaven: He gives them to understand, that by professing themselves his *Disciples*, they only obliged themselves to a more strict and exemplary Holiness; that the Way to become great in the Kingdom of Heaven (i. e. the Kingdom of the *Messiah*), was

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. vi. vii.

to practise, and teach all, even the *least Commandments*; and that they could *not enter into this Kingdom*, except their *Righteousness* should exceed the *Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, who were then usually reputed the most strict and exemplary Sect among the *Jews*. He teaches them to look upon themselves as *the Salt of the Earth*, as *the Light of the World*, as *a City set on an Hill*; and exhorts them to let their *Light so shine before Men*, that they might see their *good Works*, and glorify their *Father which is in Heaven*. As he had been accused of breaking the *Law*, and as the *Doctrine* delivered in these his *Beatitudes* might seem new and strange to his Audience, he assures them, that *he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*; to rescue it from false *Glosses*, to add to the Perfection of the *Moral Law*, and to fulfil the End and Design of the *Judicial and Ceremonial Law*. He adds, that *till Heaven and Earth pass, one Jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled*; <sup>m</sup> which Words, as they declare that our *Saviour's Doctrine* was no way contrary to the *Law*, so they might possibly be designed to intimate, that when all was *fulfilled*, the *Ceremonial and Judicial Part of the Law* should (not be abrogated, but) expire, its End and Design receiving in him a final Completion. He proceeds to interpret, and improve the Precepts of the *Moral Law*, and

<sup>m</sup> See *Grotius* in locum.

vindicate them from the corrupt Glosses of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, shewing that greater Purity, and stricter Holiness of Life would be required of his *Disciples*, than was either practised, or taught, by the Doctors of the *Law*, or than the *Law* itself in its bare literal Sense might seem to require. He teaches us to restrain the first Motions of *Anger*, or *Lust*; he forbids *Divorces*, the Use of *Oaths* in our Conversation, all Revenge and Retaliation of Injuries; he commands us to *love our Enemies*, to return *Good for Evil*; and in short, to be perfect, even as our *Father which is in Heaven*, is perfect. The Precepts which follow are equally levelled against the peculiar Abuses of those Times. Our *Lord* here censures the false Notions, and evil Practices of the *Pharisees*, and *Hypocrites*, with regard to *Alms-giving*, *Fasting*, and *Prayer*, and delivers to his *Disciples* a short, full, and comprehensive *Form of Prayer*. He exhorts them to avoid all Ostentation, and *Hypocrisy*; to do their *Righteousness in secret*, not seeking the Glory of Men, but expecting their Recompence from *God* alone: And having assured them that their *Father, which seeth in secret, would reward them openly*, he teaches them to expect this Reward in another Life; he bids them lay up for themselves *Treasures, not on Earth, but in Heaven*; and from hence takes Occasion to set forth the Folly of *Covetousness*, (a<sup>n</sup> Vice to which the *Phari-*

<sup>n</sup> Luk. xvi. 14.

ses were very much addicted), and of all immoderate Care, and Sollicitude about the things of this Life, in the most plain and familiar Style, and with the most rational and striking Arguments. Censoriousness was another Vice too common among the *Hypocrites* of those Times: This our *Lord* also cautions his *Disciples* against, in the same easy, familiar, and rational Way. In the same Style he sets forth the Duty and Efficacy of *Prayer*. He adds—*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets:* He here tacitly censures those who placed the whole of their Religion in outward Performances, and valued themselves on their punctual Observance of the *Law*: He teaches them, that to do Justice and Equity, was the chief thing commanded by *the Law, and the Prophets*, and that without this it was in vain to boast of either. The same *Hypocrites* he has in his View v. 15, &c. where he cautions his *Disciples* to beware of *false Prophets*, and tells them, that they may know such by their *Fruits*. The *Jews* expected a national Deliverer, and thought they had nothing more to do, than to enlist themselves under his Banners, and follow him to Victory and Glory: But our *Lord* calls upon them to enter in at the *strait Gate*, and assures them that *strait is the Gate, and narrow the Way, which leadeth unto Life; and that there be few that find it.* And he concludes his Discourse with

a Protestation against all such Disciples, as followed him upon false Principles. Many, he had observed, were astonished at his Miracles, were delighted with his Manner of preaching, and were willing to be listed in the Number of his *Disciples*. But he here declares, that he desired no *Disciples*, but such as would at the same Time become Proselytes to Virtue and Piety; that it was by no means sufficient to own him for their *Lord*, or to be zealous in promoting his Interest; nay, though they could *cast out Devils, and do many wonderful Works in his Name*, all this would avail them nothing, unless they made a steady Resolution to practise what he taught, to bid adieu to all Iniquity, and to do the *Will of his Father, which is in Heaven*. Such Followers he compares to one who builds his *House upon a Rock*, which would stand the Fury of the *Rain, and Floods, and Winds*. But they who only delighted to bear his sayings, and were not resolved to practise them, were like a foolish Man, who builds his *House on the Sand*, which would be overturned, as soon as the *Rain, and Floods, and Winds* beat upon it. Here is also a tacit Intimation that his Followers were not to dream of Victories and Triumphs, Kingdoms and Preferments, but must prepare themselves to combat Storms and Tempests, Tribulation and Persecution.

We have before observed the easy and familiar Style in which this Discourse is delivered. Our

*Saviour*

Saviour throughout alludes to such Objects, as were familiar to those to whom he preached, and probably were some of them at that Time in View before them—*A City that is set on a Hill cannot be hid—Behold the Fowls of the Air—Consider the Lilies of the Field—Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles?* And he delivers his Doctrine in such proverbial Expressions, as were in common Use—*If the Salt have lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted?—Whosoever smiteth thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the other also—Give to him that asketh thee—No Man can serve two Masters—The Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself—Give not that which is holy unto Dogs, neither cast ye your Pearls before Swine, &c.*

It is farther remarked by the Evangelists, that the People were astonished at his Doctrine; for he taught them, as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes. Not only the Matter, and Subject of his Discourse, was very different from what they had been used to hear from those Teachers of the Law, but was delivered also in a very different Manner. Though he says not a Word here of his being the Messiah, yet he speaks all along as one having Authority, in his own Name—*For verily I say unto you* (Chap. v. 18, 20.)—*It was said by them of old Time, Thou shalt not kill, &c. but I say unto you, v. 21,*

<sup>a</sup> Matt. vii. 28, 29. Mar. i. 22. See Blackall Disc. 87.

22—*It was said by them of old Time, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, but I say unto you, &c.* v. 27, 28. See also v. 33, 34, 38, 39, 43, 44, where he seems to assume to himself an Authority superior not only to the *Doctors of the Law*, but to *Moses* himself. In the two following Chapters also, the Precepts are all delivered in his own Name, and often ushered in with—*Verily I say unto you*, or the like. And the whole Sermon concludes with—*Whosoever heareth these Sayings of mine, and doeth them, &c.* And here let it be observed, once for all, that this is a Way of speaking peculiar to our *Saviour* alone. Both *Moses* and the *Prophets* delivered their *Doctrines*, and *Prophecies*, *in the Name of the Lord*: But our *Saviour* both acted and spoke by his own Power and Authority. He wrought his Miracles (as has been before observed) by his own Word and Power—*I will, be thou clean—I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy Bed, and go thy Way—Hold thy Peace, and come out of him.* And with the like *Authority* were his *Doctrines* and *Precepts* delivered. He does not deliver *Messages*, as a *Servant*; but gives *Commands* as a *Master* over his own *House*; and speaks in the *Language* of a *King* to his *Subjects*, of *God* to his *Creatures*.

Our *Saviour's Discourse*, *Luke vi. 20, &c.* is generally supposed to be the same with this recorded in *St. Matthew*. It is probable that our *Lord* often preached the same *Doctrine* at different *Times*, and nearly

nearly in the same Words: And it is observable, that as this Passage of St. Luke contains good Part of the Sermon on the Mount, only with some little Variation, so in other Places St. Luke gives us other Parts of this same Sermon, which appear by the Context to have been delivered on other Occasions. It seems probable that this Discourse in St. Luke was delivered nearly about the same Time with the Sermon on the Mount, but whether it be precisely the same, may be questioned. The Sermon in St. Matthew seems to be more peculiarly addressed to his *Disciples*; and perhaps was more immediately designed for the Instruction of his *Apostles* now lately appointed. <sup>P</sup> Seeing the Multitudes he retired from them into the Mountain, <sup>q</sup> as he used to do, when he sought to be private; and there (not the Multitude, but only) his *Disciples* came unto him. And he sat down, as was the usual Custom of Masters when they read Lectures to their Scholars, and taught them. Accordingly, many of his Precepts seem peculiarly addressed to his *Disciples*—*Ye are the Salt of the Earth*—*Ye are the Light of the World*. It is said indeed in the Close of this Discourse that the Multitudes—οἱ ὄχραι—were astonished at his Doctrine: But then it may be said that his *Disciples* themselves were a *Multitude*; they are called οἱ χριστιανοὶ, Luk.

<sup>P</sup> Matt. v. 1, &c.      <sup>q</sup> Matt. xiv. 23.      xvii. 1.

Joh. vi. 15.

vi. 17. Besides, the Evangelist might take occasion, from the Manner in which this Sermon is delivered, to remark what on other Occasions, as well as this, both his Disciples, and all the People had with *Astonishment* observed, that *he taught them as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.*

\* The Discourse in St. Luke seems rather to have been delivered after he was come down from the Mountain into the Plain. Accordingly, he addresses himself here both to his Disciples, and to the rest of his Audience—*And he lifted up his Eyes on his Disciples, and said—Blessed be ye Poor, &c. But wo unto you that are Rich, &c.* This Opposition still more plainly sets forth the Spiritual Nature of his Kingdom: He came to save the Poor, the Hungry, and the Despised: These were best prepared to receive his Gospel, which was not likely to meet with so favourable an Entertainment among the Rich and the Great. The rest of this Discourse is addressed to all those who would bear; and the Connection between what is here said, and what follows, is plain. After having foretold that his Followers would be *hated and persecuted*, he naturally proceeds to inculcate the *Love of our Enemies*, and universal Charity.

\* Jesus having ended this his Sermon went to Capernaum, where he was applied to by some Elders of

\* See Mar. i. 22.

\* Luk. vi. 17, &c.

\* V. 27.

\* Matt. viii. 5, &c. Luk. vii. 1, &c. See Hammond & Grossetti Annot.

the Jews, in behalf of a Roman Centurion, who was a Proselyte, and who was a Friend to the Jewish Nation and Religion, and had built them a Synagogue. They earnestly pressed him to come and heal a favourite Servant of this Man, who was very ill of a Palsey, and ready to die. Jesus immediately complied with their Request. But, as he was going, and was now not far from the House, the Centurion sent Friends to him, to tell him that he did not think himself worthy to receive him under his Roof, but that he did not doubt but that his Servant would be instantly healed, if he would only say the Word. He seems to have heard of the Cure of the Leper, (the Account of which in St. Matthew's Gospel is placed just before this) and from thence to have concluded, that our Lord was able to heal his Servant only by speaking the Word. Jesus greatly approved of his Behaviour, and his Faith : And he spake the Word, and the Servant was healed in the self-same Hour. From hence our Lord took Occasion to foretel the Calling of the Gentiles, and Rejection of the Jews : He observed that he had not found so great Faith, no not in Israel : And he told them who followed him, that many should come from the East and West, and should sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the Children of the Kingdom, says he, shall be cast into outer Darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. Our Lord alludes to the Customs at Publick Feasts and Entertainments ; and this Allusion

lusion was most particularly levelled against the Notions of the Jews, who would not so much as sit at Meat, or partake of the same Entertainment, with any of the Heathen. Jesus therefore tells them that in the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the Kingdom of the Messias, many of these despised Heathen should be admitted to sit down, and feast, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; while they who were principally and primarily the Heirs of this Kingdom, and who thought themselves peculiarly, and exclusively of all others, the Children of this Kingdom, should be themselves excluded, and cast into outer Darkness, where should be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. \* The Time of such Feasts was usually towards Night; and Numbers often flocked to them, more than the Master of the House would admit. Those therefore who were refused Admittance, were left without in the Dark, lamenting their Disappointment, and envying the Felicity of those who partook of the Entertainment. This could not but appear strange Doctrine both to the Elders of the Jews, and to his own Disciples; and we have here a strong Instance too how ready our Lord was to compassionate and relieve, all those who truly believed on him, and how little he courted popular Applause, or complied with the Notions and Prejudices of those who followed him. His Doctrines

\* See Matt. xxv. 1, &c. xxii. 13. Luk. xiii. 25, &c.

tended to alienate the Minds of those whom his Miracles would have gained.

*The next Day the benevolent Jesus met with a fresh Occasion of exerting his Power and Goodness. \* As he was going into a City called Nain, behold there was a dead Man carried out, the only Son of his Mother, and she was a Widow : And when the Lord saw her, he had Compassion on her—καὶ ἔτενε τὸν πόνον αὐτῆς. This sad Spectacle melted the Bowels of the tender-hearted Jesus : Though there was a great Concourse of People, he would not neglect this Opportunity of doing good : Immediately, without being sollicited or asked, he hastened to this poor Woman's Relief : He came and touched the Bier, and said, Young Man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and he delivered him to his Mother. This is still a greater Miracle than any we have yet met with recorded of Jesus. To raise a dead Man to Life seems to require a Power equal to his, who first gave us Life, and Breath, and all things. And this Jesus effected only by a Word's speaking, and that in his own Name, and by his own Authority—Young Man, I say unto thee, Arise. And this stupendous Miracle had the Effect we might reasonably expect from it. There came a great Fear on all, and they glorified God : And many were convinced that he was the*

\* Luk. vii. 11, &c.

Christ—Προφήτης μέγας—the great Prophet, <sup>y</sup> and that God had now, as he had promised by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, visited his People. <sup>z</sup> And this Nation and Opinion of him obtained, and his Fame spread far and wide, throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the Region round about.

\* The Fame of these wonderful Miracles, which went forth through all the Country, reached the Ears of John the Baptist, who was now in Prison. He had, it seems, some Disciples, who still retained to him; who being astonished at our Lord's Miracles, came and gave their Master an Account of them. John sent two of them to Jesus, to enquire of him whether he were the Messias, saying, Art thou <sup>b</sup> he that should come, or look we for another? John had himself borne Witness to Jesus, and declared him to be the Christ; and many of his Disciples had on his Testimony believed on him. But those Disciples, who still kept close to him, seeing him now imprisoned for the Truth's sake, without any Prospect of Relief; and seeing Jesus, though he wrought many Miracles, yet take no Notice, nor seem any way sollicitous to deliver him, might probably be offended; and possibly John himself might in

<sup>y</sup> See Luk. i. 68, &c.      <sup>z</sup> ἡ ξύλινη ὁ λόγος ὅτος περὶ αὐτοῦ.  
<sup>a</sup> Matt. xi. 2, &c. Luk. vii. 18, &c.      <sup>b</sup> οἱ εξόπλιστοι, i. e. the Messias. See Joh. vi. 14. Matt. xxi. 9.

this Condition labour under some Doubts and Perplexities: He sends his *Disciples* therefore to *Jesus* for their farther Satisfaction, and possibly for his own too. Our *Saviour's* Method of answering them is very remarkable. He could not refuse such a Person reasonable Satisfaction; and yet he did not think it proper, for Reasons already given, publickly to proclaim himself the *Christ*. What then should he do? *He in that same Hour cured many of their Infirmities, and Plagues, and of evil Spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave Sight.* And he said unto them, *Go your Way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised, to the Poor the Gospel is preached:* *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.* Our Lord here gives full Assurance to these *Disciples of John*, and all others who attended him, that he was the *Christ*, but in so prudent and cautious a Manner, that his Enemies could no way lay hold of it. He does not in express Terms say who he is, but yet at the same Time gives them a double Proof that he was the *Messiah*: He works various Kinds of Miracles before them, and refers them to the *Prophet*, <sup>c</sup> where such Miracles are set down as charactersticke Marks of the *Messiah*. These last

<sup>c</sup> See If. xxix. 18, 19. xxxv. 5, 6. lxi. 1.

Words—*Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*—seem to relate to the *Offence*, which these *Disciples* (and perhaps *John himself*) took at the Meanness of his Appearance, and his suffering *John* to lay so long in *Prison*; and intimate, that there was no just Reason why they should be *offended*, or disbelieve him, to whom all the undoubted Marks of the *Messiah* plainly belonged. And afterwards, speaking to the People concerning *John*, he told them, that *this was he, of whom it*<sup>a</sup> *was written, Behold, I send my Messenger before thy Face, which shall prepare thy Way before thee.* And again—*If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come.* Here is again another plain, though tacit Declaration, that he was the *Christ*: If *John* was the *Elias*, who was to be the Fore-runner of the *Messiah*, the *Messenger to prepare the Way before him*, this must necessarily give the People to understand that *Jesus himself was the Messiah*. And he intimates at once both the Importance of what he said, and the Reason why he expressed himself with so much Caution—*If ye will receive it—He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* He gives them also to understand, that a new and more excellent Dispensation was now ready to take Place: He says, that *John the Baptist was more than a Prophet, that among them that are born of Women there had*

<sup>a</sup> Mal. iii. 1. .

not arisen a greater than John; but that notwithstanding he that was least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he. He adds, that from the Days of John the Baptist, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the violent take it by Force. For all the Prophets, and the Law prophesied until John. These Words seem designed to intimate, though obscurely, the Abrogation of the Law, and the general Promulgation of the Gospel. There may also possibly be an Allusion to what we read Exod. xix. *The Mount of Sinai was fenced in*, and the People forbidden to break through (*μὴ θεραπεύετε*): And the Privileges of the Law were confined to the Children of Israel only; but the Gospel was to be preached to every Creature. \* *The Kingdom of Heaven* was now open to all Men, and all sorts of Men would press into it: Whereas the Pharisees would appropriate the Kingdom of Heaven, and all God's Promises, to their own Nation and Sect; the Publicans and Sinners, whom they despised, and the Gentiles, whom they abhorred, would press into it before them, and take from them, as it were by Violence, what they looked upon as their peculiar Inheritance. Our Lord goes on to censure the Jews for their Unbelief and Hardness of Heart. He complains that they were deaf to all Sort of Application, equally prepared to censure John for

\* See Luk. xvi. 16. Matt. xxi. 31. *Hammond, Whately Annot.*

his austere Life, and himself for those innocent Freedoms he took: The Expression seems to be proverbial, and alludes to the Custom of the Ancients, who used to hire *Singers* both on festival and funeral Solemnities: These usually chaunted their Song in Places of publick Concourse, and those, whom they met with, used to join in the Chorus. Our *Lord* therefore compares the *Jews* to foward and ill-natured People, who would join in no Song, nor be pleased with any Tune, merry or melancholy. He *upbraids* also the *Cities*, wherein most of his mighty *Works* were done, because they repented not; and sets forth their great Guilt and Danger. And he adds—*All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no Man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any Man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him:* Here he still more plainly declares his divine Mission and Authority, and calls himself the *Son of God* in a peculiar Manner—*All things are delivered unto me of my Father*—by which he implies himself to be the *Son of God* afterwards mentioned, who was known only to the *Father*, and who alone knows the *Father*, excepting those to whom he will reveal him: And these were not the wise and great of this World, but *Babes*, the humble and meek, those who were sensible of their own Unworthiness and Insufficiency.

\* An Instance of his Readiness to receive such Persons, who were *heavy laden*, and wearied, with the Burthen of their Sins, he shewed in *the House of Simon, a Pharisee*, who had invited him to *eat with him*. *A Woman in the City*, who had lived in a sinful Course, brought a Box of precious Ointment, and stood at his Feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his Feet with Tears, and did wipe them with the Hairs of her Head, and kissed his Feet, and anointed them with the Ointment. The Pharisee took Offence at this: He thought within himself that, if Jesus had been a Prophet, he would have known what Manner of Woman this was, and would not have permitted her to touch him. But Jesus soon convinced him, that he knew both this Woman's Life, and his private Thoughts too. He proposed to him a Parable of a Creditor, which had two Debtors, the one owed five hundred Pence, and the other fifty: And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. And then he asked the Pharisee which of these would love him most? Simon answering that he supposed that he to whom he forgave most, our Lord applied the Parable to the Case of Simon and this Woman: He told Simon that he had not paid him the Civilities usual at Entertainments: He had given him no Kiss, no Water to wash his Feet, no Oil to anoint his Head; but this Woman

\* Luk. vii. 36, &c.

had kissed his Feet, washed them with Tears, wiped them with the Hairs of her Head, and anointed them with precious Ointment. This Woman had had many Sins forgiven her, and she loved much ; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. We may observe in this Parable, that our Saviour himself answers to the Creditor. He it is therefore who is offended by our Sins, who has Power to exact the Penalty of them, and Power to forgive them. This Parable sets forth our Lord's divine Power, and gracious Acceptance of penitent Sinners, and carries with it a Reproof of the Pharisees ; intimating, that those who had not lived the best Lives formerly, were more ready to receive the Mercies offered by the Gospel, than those who valued themselves upon their own Righteousness, and saw not their Need of a Saviour. And he said unto the Woman, Thy Sins are forgiven. And they that sat at Meat with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth Sins also ? And he said to the Woman, Thy Faith hath saved thee, go in Peace.

\* Our Lord still continued in Galilee, going about through every City and Village, preaching, and shewing the glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God, and doing good, as Occasion offered. <sup>b</sup> His twelve Apostles accompanied him in this Circuit ; and cer-

<sup>a</sup> Luk. viii. 1, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid.

tain Women also, who had been healed of evil Spirits and Infirmities. Amongst the rest was Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven Devils, and many others which ministered unto him of their Substance.

<sup>1</sup> About this Time was brought unto him one possessed with a Devil, blind and dumb ; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the People were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David ? i. e. the Messiah. <sup>k</sup> This occasioned such a Concourse of People, that, though he was got into an House, they would not give him Leisure, or Time, to eat Bread. And what seems to have made the Disturbance greater, was that the Pharisees, and Scribes which were come down from Jerusalem, had taught the People an Evasion, to account for these Miracles. They could not deny the Truth of the Facts, but they were willing to take Shelter under any Pretence, rather than believe ; and therefore they ascribed them, not to the Finger of God, but to the Power of the Devil : They said, This Fellow doth not cast out Devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils, His Friends, that is, I suppose, his Mother and Brethren, hearing of this Disturbance, and this evil Report raised of him, and fearing some Mischief might befall him, went out to lay hold of him, and bring him safe home—For they said, He is be-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 22, &c.

<sup>k</sup> Mar. iii. 19, &c.

*side himself*: This, I suppose, must either refer to the Multitude spoken of in the former Verse, or else be taken impersonally—it was reported that he was beside himself: And what follows in the 22d Verse gives us an Account how such an Opinion came to prevail. To this also agrees what is said v. 30, 31, where we read—*They said he had an unclean Spirit*; it follows—*Ἐφχονται οἱ*—There came therefore his Brethren, and his Mother: They had heard of the great Tumult, and the evil Report raised of our Lord; and this alarmed them, and made them endeavour to secure him. This will also account for our Lord's Behaviour to his Mother and Brethren, which otherwife might seem rather slighting and undutiful. This Fear of theirs argued some Mistrust of his Power, and therefore he expressed some Disapprobation of it.

But this Pretence of the Pharisees he exposed and confuted, by the most convincing Arguments; and thereby plainly gave them to understand, that he really was what the People took him to be, *the Christ, the Son of David*. He tells them, *First*, that it was absurd to suppose that the *Prince of the Devils* should *cast out Devils*; for this would be to fight against himself, and destroy his own *Kingdom*. The very Nature therefore of the Miracle here wrought plainly shewed, that it could not be the Work of any *evil Spirit*. <sup>1</sup> *Secondly*, he urges that the *Jews*

<sup>1</sup> See *Hammond. Grotii Annot.*

themselves

themselves pretended to *cast out Devils*, and therefore they could not ascribe what he had done to *Beelzebub*, without incurring the same Censure themselves. He then concludes his Argument, inferring, that if he *cast out Devils by the Spirit of God*, then the Kingdom of God was come unto them. And he teaches them, that *Satan* had hitherto kept his Palace among them, and ruled over them; but that now he was dispossessed, and his *Kingdom* at an End. This whole Discourse tends to prove that he was the *Christ*, and speaks it indeed in plain Terms—*απειποται επ' ουας η βασιλεια των ουων*—the *Kingdom of God is already come unto you*. And it is plain, as we shall see presently, that the *Pharisees* so understood him.

He goes on to set forth the great Guilt, as well as Folly, of these Objectors. He tells them that *all Manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men*, and that *whosoever speaketh a Word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him*; (which may mean, either that all Offences of one Man against another should be *forgiven*, or in particular, that all their hard Speeches and Calumnies against him might be *forgiven*); but *whosoever should blaspheme, or speak against the Holy Ghost, it should not be forgiven him, neither in this World, nor in the World to come*. The *Blasphemy* against the *Holy Ghost* here mentioned is plainly, the ascribing

ing the Miracles wrought by *the Spirit of God* to the *Devil*: And the Reason why such Sin is so severely censured, and so heavily threatened, we have in the Words following, wherein our *Lord* attributes this their Calumny to the evil Disposition of their *Hearts*. When *God* himself interposes, and gives Attestation to a Person by plain and undeniable Miracles, if Men, who cannot deny the Truth and Quality of such Miracles, will yet stand out against Conviction, and, against all Sense and Reason, ascribe them to *the Power of the Devil*; it is plain their *Heart* is hardened, and they, morally speaking, incapable of Conviction or Reformation, and therefore no Wonder if their *Sin* is irremissible. Our *Lord* intimates, that this might possibly seem only a hasty Speech, an *idle Word*, but that such Word could not have dropt from them, if their *Heart* had not been fully set in them to do evil: And therefore he pronounces, that their *Sin should not be forgiven, neither in this Age, nor in that to come.* <sup>m</sup> This seems to refer to a Persuasion of the Jews, that every Jew had a Part in *the Age to come*, and that all their *Sins*, which could not be forgiven in the *Mosaick Dispensation*, in *the present Age*, would yet be at last finally forgiven in *the Age to come*; i. e. either in the Days of the *Messiah*, or in a future State of Glory. It seems therefore to be our *Lord's Design* to assure them,

<sup>m</sup> See *Hammond. Grotii Annot.*

that

that neither the *Law*, nor the *Gospel*, afforded any Hopes to such incorrigible Offenders ; and that though the *Kingdom of God was come upon them*, yet such Persons as they would have no Share in it.

The *Scribes and Pharisees* could not but see the Drift of our *Lord's Discourse*. They understood that he spoke of himself, as of the *Messiah* : And not being able to maintain their former Plea, they had Recourse to a new one. They answered him, saying, *Master, we would see a Sign from thee*; i. e. If you really are the *Christ*, as you would seem to insinuate, give us the proper Tokens of the *Messiah*, and shew us a *Sign from Heaven*. What the Meaning of this Demand of theirs was, has been <sup>n</sup>already explained. And for the same Reasons as before he refused to gratify their Demand : They were *an evil and adulterous Generation*, and therefore he did not think proper to declare himself so openly. But however, he referred them to a *Sign hereafter* to be given, when he should rise from the Dead : *An evil and adulterous Generation seeketh after a Sign, and there shall no Sign be given to it, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three Days, and three Nights, in the Whale's Belly, so shall the Son of Man be three Days, and three Nights, in the Heart of the Earth.* Whe-

<sup>n</sup> Page 58, &c.

ther this Prediction was understood at the Time it was spoken, either by the *Pharisees*, or his own *Disciples*, does not certainly appear. But after his Resurrection it must, to all who considered it, appear to be a plain Prediction of what then happened, and carry with it a convincing Proof that he was a true Prophet.

He takes Occasion, from this Mention of *Jonas*, to set before the *Jews* the Example of *the People of Nineveh*, and also of *the Queen of Sheba*, and from thence to upbraid them with their Infidelity. And he plainly enough, though indirectly, declares that he himself is greater than either *Jonas*, or *Solomon*—*Behold a greater than Jonas, a greater than Solomon, is here.*

And, in Allusion to the Miracle he had just wrought, he sets forth, under the Figure of *an unclean Spirit*, which, being dispossessed, returns afterwards with more Company, the sad and irrecoverable Condition of the *Jews*, who should reject his *Gospel*; admonishing them to beware lest the *Devil*, who was cast out from among them, by the preaching of the *Gospel*, should, if they repented not, and received not the Salvation offered them, again return, and take up his Residence among them; and so *their last State would be worse than their first*, and their Condition more deplorable and desperate, than if *Satan* had never been *cast out*, nor the *Gospel* ever preached among them.

them. Thus did our *Lord* improve to moral and spiritual Purposes every Occasion that offered.

• While he was thus discoursing to the People, he was told that his *Mother* and *Brethren* stood without, desiring to speak with him, but could not come at him for the Press. *Jesus answered—Who is my Mother? And who are my Brethren?* And he stretched forth his Hand toward his Disciples, and said, Bebold my *Mother* and my *Brethren*. For whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my *Brother*, and *Sister*, and *Mother*. <sup>¶</sup> To the like Purpose he answered, when a *Woman* in the Crowd cried out—*Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked.* But he said—*Yea, rather blessed are they that bear the Word of God and keep it.* This is the Doctrine which he took every Opportunity to teach and inculcate, and which the *Jews* had great Occasion to be put in Mind of, that no Prerogatives of Birth, or Family, were of any Value in the Sight of *God*; but those only, who feared him, and wrought Righteousness, were accepted of him. Nor was it barely sufficient to bear the *Word of God*, or to become *Christ's Disciple*: Those only, who heard the *Word of God*, and kept it, and the *Will of his Father in Heaven*, would be accepted in his Sight. Here

<sup>°</sup> Matt. xii. 46. Luk. viii. 19. Mar. iii. 31, &c.

<sup>¶</sup> Luk. xi. 27, 28.

again

again also we may observe that he calls *God his Father.*

\* The same Day Jesus went out to the Sea-side, and great Multitudes being gathered together, he went into a Ship, and from thence preached to the People, who stood on the Shore. But we find this Sermon of his very different from that on the Mount. That was very plain and intelligible; but this was so wrapt up in *Parables*, that his *Disciples* themselves did not understand it. If we enquire into the Reason of this, we shall possibly have some Light from the different Subjects of these two Discourses. In the former he delivered chiefly Precepts of Moral Duty; these he taught with great Plainness and Clearness: Here he speaks of the Nature of his *Kingdom*, and therefore he did not think proper to speak so plainly. The Reasons of his thus delivering himself in *Parables* are here given us—*This People's Heart is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, &c.* While the People were possessed with such false Notions of the *Messiah*, it was to little Purpose to declare the Nature of his *Kingdom* in plain and express Terms, and therefore he chose to deliver it in *Parables*; which, as they were least liable to give Offence, so they conveyed excellent and important Doctrines to such as were rightly disposed,

\* Matt. xiii. 1, &c. Mar. iv. 1, &c. Luk. viii. 4, &c.

and

and *had Ears to hear*. The Jews imagined *the Kingdom of the Messiah* would be a temporal Kingdom, and that all Jews, as such, would have their Share in it. But these *Parables* set forth to them *who had Ears to hear*, that the Benefits Men would reap from his *Kingdom* depended on their own good Dispositions; that this *Kingdom* would not take Place till *the End of the World*; that in this World, the Good and the Bad would be suffered to live promiscuously, but hereafter a Distinction should be made, between *the Children of the Kingdom*, and *the Children of the wicked one*; and that not till *then*, and then *the Righteous* only should receive their Inheritance, and *shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father*. The *Parables* of *the Grain of Mustard Seed*, and of *the Leaven*, set forth that *the Kingdom of Heaven* was not to come, as they expected, with Pomp and *Observation*, but was gradually to increase from a mean and low Beginning, till it overspread the Face of the Earth. Or, perhaps, hereby may be signified the Manner of *Christ's* preaching: He instilled into Men's Minds the Principles of Piety and Virtue by slow and gentle Degrees, till at last they tinctured the whole Man, and brought forth Fruit in his Life and Conversation. But when they were alone, he expounded all these things to his Disciples. Here he speaks very plainly: The Nature of his *Kingdom* is here manifestly

manifestly set forth. A future State of Rewards and Punishments, when *the Wicked shall be severed from the Just*, and every one shall be recompensed according to his Works, is here most clearly taught: And the Importance of this Doctrine is fully declared. These are *the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, which had been kept secret from the Foundation of the World: These are *the Things which many Prophets and Righteous Men had desired to see and bear*: These every Man, who hath Ears, is called upon to hear. This Kingdom of Heaven is the Treasure, the Pearl of inestimable Price, which is well worth all our Care and Endeavours, and which to purchase, we may joyfully part with *all that we have*.

' In the Evening Jesus went into a Ship with his Disciples, where he wrought a Miracle of a different Kind from any which we have hitherto met with. There arose a great Tempest in the Sea, insomuch that the Ship was covered with the Waves: But he rebuked the Wind, and said unto the Sea, Peace, be still; and the Wind ceased, and there was a great Calm. This struck the Disciples with Wonder and Consternation: They knew it was God alone, <sup>s</sup> who bringeth forth the Wind out of his Treasures, <sup>t</sup> and maketh the Storm to cease; <sup>u</sup> who ruleth the raging

<sup>r</sup> Matt. viii. 23, &c. Mar. iv. 35, &c. Luk. viii. 22, &c.

<sup>s</sup> Jer. x. 13. <sup>t</sup> Psal. cvii. 29. <sup>u</sup> lxxxix. 9.

of the Sea, and stilleth the Waves thereof, when they arise. Amazed therefore they said one to another—Who is this, that even the Wind and the Sea obey him?

\* When our Lord came over unto the other Side of the Sea, a fresh Occasion of displaying his divine Power and Goodness presented itself. There met him two possessed with Devils, coming out of the Tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no Man might pass by that Way. \* That this was not a Case of common Madness, appears most evidently from all the Circumstances of the Relation; from the ready Acknowledgement which these Persons made of our Lord's divine Mission; from his Behaviour and Discourse to them; but especially from the Frenzy which seized the Swine on these Persons being healed. \* The evil Spirits seem to have been in a great Consternation at our Lord's Appearance, and to have been sensible that he came to destroy their Kingdom, and deprive them of that Power which was then permitted them over Men's Bodies. These Spirits in particular, when they saw Jesus afar off, cried out with a loud Voice, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? And besought him not to torment them, nor command them to

\* Matt. viii. 28, &c. Mar. v. 1, &c. Luk. viii. 26, &c. \* See above, p. 80, &c. \* See Mar. i. 24. iii. 11. Luk. iv. 41.

go into the Deep, that is (<sup>2</sup> as appears by comparing this with other Passages of Scripture), send them to be confined in the Place of Torments, before the Time. They desired him rather to permit them to enter into an Herd of Swine which was there feeding. And Jesus gave them Leave; and the unclean Spirits entered into the Swine, and the Herd ran violently down a steep Place into the Sea, and perished in the Waters. It appears from <sup>1</sup> Josephus, that Gadara was a Greek City, and the Inhabitants partly Jews and partly Heathens, as we might guess also by their keeping Herds of Swine. Our Lord therefore, (as Grotius observes), might hereby design to teach these Greeks, that the Law of Moses was of divine Original; and the Jews, that Men who lived the Life of Swine, were abominable in the Sight of God, and the proper Prey of the Devil. But, to return to the History; if these Gadarenes were Heathens, or Apostate Jews, it is no Wonder that they were alarmed and terrified at this Miracle, and attended rather to the Loss they had sustained, than to the Cure wrought: They therefore besought Jesus that he would depart out of their Coasts. Our Lord's Behaviour on this Occasion is worthy our Notice. He quietly withdrew from a People not disposed to receive him: But yet even here he left not

<sup>2</sup> See Rev. ix. 1, &c. xi. 7. xx. 1, &c. *Hammond*  
*Grotii* Annot. <sup>1</sup> *Antiq. Jud. Lib. 17. C. 13.*

himself without Witness : He commanded the Person, *who had been possessed*, and who desired to go along with him, *to go home to his Friends, and shew how great things God had done unto him.* His Prudence, his Goodness, and his Modesty are here conspicuous. We see that he sought not his own Glory, but that of God—*Shew how great things God hath done unto thee :* We see he neglected no proper Opportunity of making himself and his miraculous Works known. Though in his own Country, where there was Danger of giving Offence, and raising Disturbances, he might sometimes enjoin Silence to those he healed ; yet here, where there was no such Danger, he expressly commanded the Person, on whom this Miracle was wrought, to publish it.

<sup>b</sup> *Matthew the Publican*, who had been before called to be a *Disciple and Apostle*, made now an Entertainment for *Jesus and his Disciples at his own House.* To this Feast Matthew had invited several of his own Occupation, *Publicans and Sinners*, hoping, as we may suppose, they would be converted by his *Master's Doctrine.* But *the Scribes and Pharisees*, as usual, took Offence at this, and said to *his Disciples*, *Why eateth your Master with Publicans and Sinners ?* Jesus answered them, that *they who were whole needed not a Physician, but they that were sick ; and that he came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners,*

<sup>b</sup> Matt. ix. 10, &c. Mar. ii. 15, &c. Luk. vi. 29, &c.

*to Repentance.* He gives them a very proper and sufficient Excuse for his own Conduct: *He came to call Sinners to Repentance*, and therefore must converse with *Sinners*: And at the same Time he tacitly rebukes their Arrogance and Presumption, who thought themselves so *righteous* as to need no *Repentance*.

*Then came to him the Disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy Disciples fast not?* It is an Idiom of Speech common in Scripture, and is the same as if they had said—Why do not thy *Disciples fast* as well as we, &c. Though *John* had pointed out *Jesus* to his *Disciples* as the *Messiah*, yet some of them seem to have remained still unsatisfied. One Objection, which they made, was the free Manner, in which *Jesus* and his *Disciples* lived; going to Entertainments, and neglecting the Duties, as they thought, of *Fasting* and *Abstinence*, which their Master, and they, and also the *Pharisees*, strictly observed. To these Persons our *Lord* was ever ready to give reasonable Satisfaction. <sup>4</sup> He had lately given them convincing Proofs of his divine Mission, and he now gives a proper Answer to this Question of theirs. He puts them in Mind of what their Master <sup>5</sup> had taught them, that he was the *Bridegroom*; and therefore, while he continued

<sup>5</sup> Matt. ix. 14, &c. Mar. ii. 18, &c. Luk. v. 33, &c.

\* See above, p. 113, &c.      <sup>6</sup> Joh. iii 29.

with his Disciples, it was a Kind of festival Time, and no proper Season for *Fasting*: But the Days were coming when he should be taken from them; and then this Duty would become seasonable, and would be practised by them. And under familiar Comparisons he gives them to understand, that it was necessary to adapt his Doctrines in some Measure to the Weakness of his Disciples. *He came to call Sinners to Repentance*, and therefore did not think proper at first to require too much of them, nor to enjoin them such Austerities as would make them averse to him and his Doctrines. If thus he had done, his Doctrine would have been lost upon them; and they, who might by Degrees be weaned from their evil Courses, and inured to the Practice of Virtue and Piety, would have irrecoverably perished. And this will account for his Manner of preaching to his Disciples. He did not declare to them the whole Truth at once; but it was his Practice to put new Wine into new Bottles; he unfolded to them the *Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven* by gentle Degrees,<sup>1</sup> as they were able to bear them.

<sup>2</sup> While he spake these things unto them, there came to him Jairus, a Ruler of the Synagogue at Capernaum, who besought him to come and heal his only Daughter,

<sup>1</sup> Mar. iv. 33. See Joh. xvi. 12.  
Mar. v. 22, &c. Luk. viii. 41, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 18, &c.

who lay at the Point of Death. And Jesus arose and followed him. As he went, a Woman, who had been diseased with an Issue of Blood twelve Years, and had spent all she had upon Physicians, but received no Benefit, came behind him, and touched the Border of his Garment. She was in a State of legal Uncleanliness, and therefore she did not presume openly to apply to him: But she came privately behind him, hoping that, if she could but touch his Garment, she should be made whole. And according to her Hopes, she immediately found herself relieved from her Distemper. Jesus perceiving what had happened, asked who had touched him: She trembling confessed the whole Truth. And he said unto her, Daughter be of good Comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole, go in Peace. The same Goodness, Meekness, and Humility, shines through his whole Behaviour.

But there came a Messenger from the Ruler's House, to inform him that his Daughter was actually dead, and that there was no Occasion to trouble Jesus any farther. But Jesus said to the Ruler, Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole. When he came to the House, he found the Minstrels attending, and all weeping and wailing. Jesus told them that the Damsel was not dead, but only asleep, meaning that her Death was, like Sleep, only for a short Time. They, either misunderstanding him, or doubting of his Power, laughed him to scorn,

knowing that she was dead. But putting the People forth, he went into the House, taking with him only Peter, and James, and John, and the Father and the Mother of the Maiden, and taking her by the Hand, said, *Damsel arise*, and she arose, and walked; and he commanded that something should be given her to eat. But he strictly charged her Parents that they should tell no Man what was done. There is a remarkable Difference in our Lord's Behaviour now, and immediately before at Gadara. There he commanded the Person he had dispossessed to publish how great things God had done unto him; here he charges the Persons privy to this great Miracle, that no Man should know it. A View of the different Circumstances of these two Cases may let us into the Motives of our Lord's Conduct. The Gadarenes were mostly Heathens, and his Person and Character but little known there; and therefore the Fame of his Miracles was not likely to cause Disturbances there.<sup>b</sup> But now he was at Capernaum, his own City,<sup>1</sup> where so many of his wonderful Works had been done, and yet they continued impenitent. Here then, we may suppose, he had many and powerful Enemies, and also zealous Friends. The People were now gathered together, and the Multitude thronged him. Jairus himself was a Person of

<sup>b</sup> See Lightfoot Harm. <sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 23. Mar. i. 21, &c., Luk. iv. 23, 31. x. 15.

Eminence, a Ruler of the Synagogue ; and his Zeal might have been productive of hurtful Effects, if he had not been laid under proper Restraints. Our Lord therefore, when he performed this Miracle, took special Care to prevent any Tumult. *He put the People forth*, and enjoined the Parents Silence. At the same Time he contrived that the Fact should be sufficiently ascertained, and properly testified : He took with him three of his own Disciples, and the Father and the Mother of the Maiden ; and they saw her, who had been dead, walk and eat. \* For the same, or the like Reasons, when applied to by two blind Men, he deferred their Cure till he came into the House, and straightly charged them not to divulge it.

<sup>1</sup> From hence Jesus went to his own Country, to Nazareth ; but found them still labouring under the same Prejudices, and offended at the Meanness of his Birth and Education. They were astonished at his Wisdom and mighty Works : <sup>m</sup> But—Is not this the Carpenter's Son, &c. was still an insuperable Objection. He therefore soon left them ; nor did he work many Miracles there, only he laid his Hands on a few sick folks, and healed them. Their Infidelity is ascribed by the Evangelists as the Reason why he wrought so few Miracles there. St. Mark

\* Matt. ix. 27, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 54.

Mar. vi. 1.

<sup>n</sup> See Luk. iv. 22.

says

says that *he could there do no mighty Work*; <sup>a</sup> which is generally supposed to signify, that he did not think proper there to shew his Divine Power, because he knew it would have no Effect upon them. But the Expression may very well be taken literally. Our *Lord* usually healed such Persons only, as applied to him for a Cure. If therefore such a Spirit of Infidelity prevailed at *Nazareth*, that few thought fit to apply to him, it might very properly be said that *he could do there no mighty Work*.

<sup>b</sup> And now *Jesus* again took a Circuit through the Cities and Villages of Galilee. He still taught and wrought Miracles publickly, wherever it might be done with Safety. *He taught in their Synagogues, and preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healed every Sickness, and every Disease among the People.*

<sup>c</sup> Seeing the Multitudes who flocked to him, and compassionating their gross Ignorance, and Want of proper Persons to instruct them, they being in the Condition of *Sheep*, exposed to numberless Dangers, without any *Shepherd* to feed, or guide them, <sup>d</sup> he now thought proper to send out his twelve *Apostles*, whom he had before called and ordained to this Office. They were sent out into different Parts, *two by two*; their Commission was

<sup>a</sup> See Christian's Faith a rational Assent, P. 161, &c.  
*Grati* Annot.      <sup>b</sup> Matt. ix. 35, &c. Mar. vi. 6.      <sup>c</sup> Matt. ix. 36, &c.      <sup>d</sup> Matt. x. 1, &c.      Mar. vi. 7, &c.  
 Luk. ix. 1.

to preach to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel; and the Doctrine they were to deliver was the very same with that of their Master. They were to exhort Men to *repent*, and to assure them that *the Kingdom of Heaven was at Hand*: They were not instructed, or authorized, to declare that their Master himself was the *Christ*: They were empowered to work all Sorts of Miracles, to heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, and cast out Devils: They were ordered to make no Provision for their Journey, neither Money, nor Change of Raiment, nor Staves for their Defence; and were promised Support and Maintenance, wherever they came. The Instructions he gave them, and the Treatment, which he foretold they should meet with, must appear very strange, and uncomfortable, to those who were in high Expectation of temporal Advancement. He tells them that *he sends them forth as sheep among Wolves*; that they must expect to be delivered up to Councils, to be scourged in the Synagogues, and to be brought before Governors and Kings, and to be hated of all Men for his Names Sake; that they could hope for no better Treatment than their *Master*, but must prepare to encounter Reproach and Persecution, *to forsake Father and Mother, Son and Daughter and to take up their Cross and follow him*. He promises them no peace, or Prosperity; but foretells *Enmity, and Variance between the nearest and dearest*

Relations,

Relations, as the Event and Consequence of his preaching. Against all these Dangers and Difficulties, he arms them, not with Promises of Kingdoms and Preferments, or any immediate temporal Advantages, but with the Promise of the Assistance of God's Spirit, and the Support of his Providence, and the Expectation of future Rewards from him. He encourages them *not to fear them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul*; but bids them rather fear him, *which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*. He assures them that, *if they confess him before Men, he will confess them before his Father, which is in Heaven*; and that *he that loseth his Life for his Sake shall find it*. This Discourse of our Blessed Saviour carries with it evident Tokens of his Divine Mission. The Duty of Faith, and a firm Reliance on God's Protection under all Dangers and Temptations, is here most plainly taught, and most powerfully enforced. The Immortality of the Soul, and a future Day of Judgment, when the Righteous should be rewarded, and the Wicked thrust into Hell, Doctrines but imperfectly taught, either among the Jews, or Heathens, are here most clearly revealed. We have here also a clear Prophecy of what afterwards befell the Apostles, and first Disciples. They did not immediately on their being now sent forth meet with such Treatment; but after our Lord's Ascension, we find (*in the Acts of the Apostles and elsewhere*), every Particular

ticular here mentioned most punctually fulfilled. An *Enthusiast* would scarcely have imagined, or an *Impostor* chosen to declare, and neither of them could have foreseen, such Events as these, so contrary to the Expectations and Notions of the *Jews*, and so likely to discourage and offend his *Disciples*. Nor is the Doctrine here taught the Language of *Impostors*, or the *Words of him that bath a Devil*.

The *Apostles*, being thus instructed and commissioned, departed, and went through the Towns, preaching the *Gospel*, and healing every where, and casting out Devils. At this the People were very much surprized. Other *Prophets* had worked Miracles before; but no *Prophet* ever yet had empowered others to work Miracles in his Name. Men therefore formed various Conjectures concerning him: Some imagined that he was *Elias*, the Fore-runner of the *Messiah*; others thought that one of the old *Prophets* was risen again, or else a new *Prophet*, as great as any of them, now made his Appearance. *Herod* himself was strangely perplexed: He had lately put *John the Baptist* to Death; and his guilty Conscience suggested to him that he was again risen from the Dead, and therefore mighty Works shewed forth themselves in him.

<sup>¶</sup> Luk. ix. 6. Mar. vi. 12, 13. <sup>¶</sup> Mar. vi. 14, &c.

Luk. ix. 7, &c. Matt. xiv. 1, 2.

<sup>1</sup> Jesus finding that the many Miracles wrought by himself, and his Disciples, had spread abroad his Name, and hearing that Herod had put John to Death, and began to be alarmed at the mighty Works wrought by his Authority, thought fit to retire, and went privately by Ship into a desert Place. But yet he could not be concealed. The People heard thereof, saw the Way that he took, and followed him on Foot out of the Cities. Jesus, though he sought to be private, yet would neglect no proper Occasion of doing good. He was moved with Compassion toward them, and he healed their Sick. He looked upon them as Sheep having no Shepherd, as ignorant People, who wanted Instruction: And therefore he kindly received them, spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and taught them many things. And as they were now in a desert Place, far from any Place of Accommodation, and the Day began to wear away, while the People were listening to his Doctrine; and as the People had nothing to eat, and could not easily provide themselves with proper Refreshments, Jesus, unwilling to send the People away fasting, who had come so far to hear his Doctrine, wrought a Miracle to feed them, and made five Barley-Loaves, and two small Fishes, which the Disciples had probably provided for their own Supper, to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiv. 13, &c. Mar. vi. 30, &c. Luk. ix. 10, &c.  
Joh. vi. 1, &c.

satisfy five thousand Men, besides Women and Children. And not only this, but after they had all eaten as much as they would, and were filled, there was taken up of Fragments that remained to them twelve Baskets full.

This was a most astonishing Miracle: There could be no Fancy nor Delusion in it: Hungry Men could not imagine themselves fed without something real to satisfy their Hunger: It was impossible to make Provision for such a Multitude in such a desert Place; or, if it had been possible, Provisions could not have been conveyed there, without any of them seeing or perceiving it. \* The People therefore were wonderfully affected with this Miracle, and concluded from hence that he was the *Messiah*. They said—*ὅτι ὁτός εἰσιν ἀληθῶς οἱ Προφῆται οἱ ἐγχόμενοι εἰς τὸν κόσμον*—this is of a Truth that Prophet that should come into the World. But as they thought of none but a temporal *Messiah*, so the Effect of this their Conviction was, that they were ready to declare him their King. Jesus perceiving their Intentions, and fearing they might seize him by Force, whether he would or not, took all possible Care to elude their Design. \* He immediately commanded his *Disciples* with no small Earnestness, and Hurry, to get again into the Ship,

\* Joh. vi. 14, &c. Matt. xiv. 22, &c. Mar. vi. 45, &c.

\* *καὶ ἤγιος ἦράγκατε* Matt. xiv. 22, &c. Mar. vi. 45, &c.

and to go over unto the other Side, while he sent away the People. Having thus secured his Disciples from being drawn in to take Part in their Design, he took the Opportunity of the Night to dismiss the People, and went up into a Mountain apart to pray. But concluding the People would come together again the next Day, he returned to his Disciples by miraculously walking over the Sea, in Hopes that the People knowing that he went not with his Disciples, and not finding him where they left him, might give over their Project.

\* The Disciples were now, in Obedience to our Lord's commands, rowing on the Sea : They saw nothing of their Master, who, I suppose, had promised to follow them : The Night came on, the Wind was contrary, the Sea tempestuous, and the Ship tossed with Waves : When at last Jesus appeared to them, walking on the Sea, they supposed it had been a Spirit, and cried out for Fear. But he immediately quieted their Fears, saying unto them—Be of good Cheer, it is I, be not afraid. Peter answered him, and said, Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the Water. And he said, Come. Peter on this adventured to step forth into the Sea. But when he saw the Wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his Hand, and caught him,

\* Matt. xiv. 24, &c. Mar. vi. 47, &c. Joh. vi. 17, &c.  
and

and said unto him, O thou of little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the Ship, the Wind ceased, and they immediately arrived at the Place to which they were bound. This new Miracle quite astonished these Disciples: They came and worshipped him (nor did he discourage or forbid them), saying, of a Truth, thou art the Son of God. As soon as he arrived at this Shore, the People flocked to him; and whithersoever he entered into Villages, or Cities, or Country, they laid the Sick in the Streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the Border of his Garment; and as many as touched him were made whole.

The next Day the same People, whom he had fed so miraculously, and whom he had left behind him on the other Side of the Sea, came together again, expecting to find him where they had left him the Night before. But not meeting with him they were greatly surprised, especially as there had been no Boats there, only that which carried his Disciples over, which they saw put out to Sea without him. However, other Boats happening to come that Day, they made Use of them, and went over in Quest of Jesus. At last they found him in the Synagogue at Caper-naum.

Joh. vi. 22, &c. See Hammond, Grotii Annot. Clagett's Paraphr.

Jesus, seeing no other Way of getting rid of these importunate Admirers, discourses to them in the Manner recorded Job. vi. 26, &c. This Passage of Scripture may perhaps seem at first Sight as strange, and unaccountable, as any in the Gospels. These People, it may be said, were convinced by our Saviour's Miracles that he was the *Messiah*, and sought him out with no small Zeal and Diligence. But he, instead of receiving them kindly, and giving them proper Instructions, does and says all he can to discourage them, and alienate their Minds from him, and discourses to them in such a strange, figurative, and unintelligible Style, as offended not only them, but *many also of his own Disciples*. A proper Attention to the Circumstances, which our Saviour was now in, may possibly clear up this Difficulty. These People, though they were wonderfully affected by his Miracles, and believed him to be the *Prophet that should come into the World*, yet did not believe on right Principles: They had no Notion of any but a temporal *Messiah*, and therefore *when they saw the Miracle that Jesus did, they would have taken him by Force, and made him their King*. Our Lord was therefore in no small Distress: Here was a large *Multitude* ready to proclaim him their *King*: These People were hastening to the *Feast of the Passover*,<sup>z</sup> which was now at Hand. Here

<sup>z</sup> Job, vi. 4.

they

they would probably have conducted our *Lord* in Triumph, and been joined on the Way by still larger Multitudes. This was a Danger, from which *Jesus* sought all Means to escape. He had already taken no small Pains to get away from them; but now, being again overtaken, he had no human Remedy left, but by saying something which might discourage and offend them. He begins therefore with a severe Reproof, telling them, that they did not come to him from any real and firm Conviction occasioned by his Miracles, but with the Hope of some temporal Advantage: He had fed them in a miraculous Manner; and they hoped he could do the same, or the like, for them again: And therefore, alluding to the Miracle lately wrought, he exhorteth them to labour not for the Meat that perisheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life: This he tells them *the Son of Man shall give unto them; for him hath God the Father sealed.* They answered, *What shall we do, that we might work the Works of God?* By the Works of God they meant the great Work of setting up the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, and delivering the Jewish Nation from the Yoke they laboured under. They desired to know how they were to begin, and what they were first to attempt. But *Jesus* corrected their Error: *He said unto them, This is the Work*

K 2 . . . . . of

of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent. Their Reply is indeed very strange. They who had seen, and heard of, so many Miracles wrought by him, and had just before been Witnesses to that most wonderful Multiplication of the *Loaves and Fishes*, and had been so transported thereat, that they could scarcely be restrained, from proceeding to open Insurrection, now ask him—*What Sign shewest thou, that we may see and believe? What dost thou work?* But it may be said, that the Jews (as has been before observed) expected some publick Notification of the Appearance of their *Messiah* by some *Sign from Heaven*: And therefore, as they concluded from our *Lord's* Miracles that he was the *Messiah*, they thought it Time to call upon him for this *Sign*. Besides, they seem to have been disgusted at his Treatment of them. When they would have proclaimed him *King*, he industriously avoided them. When they had again found him, they met with a Rebuke, instead of the Encouragement they expected. And he began to them a Discourse of *everlasting Life*, which we may suppose seemed to them nothing to their present Purpose. And therefore we find them now endeavouring to disparage the Miracle, which so astonished them before: They compared it with that of the *Mannah* given to the *Israelites* in the Wil-

derness. Their Meaning seems to be—Thou hast indeed wrought a considerable Miracle, but not comparable to that of *Moses*: He fed a much larger Multitude, and that for forty Years together, with Food visibly sent down from *Heaven*: Shew us some such *Sign*, and we will *believe*. *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that Bread from Heaven; but my Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven. For the Bread of God is he, which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World.*<sup>b</sup> This seems to be a Hebrew Phrase, expressing a Preference by a Negation of the opposite Side of the Comparison. We have an Instance of the like in the Words immediately preceding—*Labour not for the Meat which perisheth, but (i. e. not so much as) for the Meat, which endureth unto everlasting Life:* So our Lord would teach these *Jews*, that the *Bread* which *Moses* gave their *Fathers*, was not comparable to that *Bread* which was now offered them. This *Bread* came really down from the highest *Heavens*; and will support and nourish those who eat thereof, not for a few Years only, but to *Life everlasting*. They, misunderstanding him, desired to partake of this *Bread*. He told them more plainly that *he was the Bread of Life*: But they could not understand such figurative Discourse; they could

<sup>b</sup> See *Glaſſi*: *Philol. Sacr. Lib. iii. Tract. 5. Can. 22, 23.*

not conceive why he should call himself *Bread*, or how he could say *he came down from Heaven*, whereas they were well acquainted with his Origin, and knew his Father and Mother. Jesus tells them (as he had intimated too before) that it was their own carnal Prejudices, and worldly Temper, which hindered them from seeing and embracing the Truth; that *no one could come to him, except the Father, who had sent him, drew him, and that every one, who had heard, and learned, of the Father, that is, who came with an honest Heart, and good Disposition of Mind, would believe on him*. He continues, in Allusion both to the Miracle of *Loaves*, and to the fore-mentioned Instance of *Manna*, to discourse of himself under the Image of *Bread*. He calls himself *the Bread of Life, the living Bread, which came down from Heaven*; and he tells them, that *the Bread, which he would give for the Life of the World, is his Flesh*; and that *who so eateth his Flesh, and drinketh his Blood, hath eternal Life, &c.* By giving his *Flesh for the Life of the World*, he plainly alludes to his Passion; and by *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*, he means, as he himself hath explained it, v. 29, 35, 47, believing on him, that is, looking on him as our Redeemer, and putting our Trust in the Propitiation which he hath made for us, by offering his Body, and shedding his Blood for us; though I doubt not but the Words carry a farther Allusion to the

Sacrament,

Sacrament, which he should afterwards institute, in which *the Bread and Wine*, which were to be eaten and drunken, were to represent his *Flesh and Blood* sacrificed for us, and to convey the Benefits of that Sacrifice to all faithful Receivers.

We shall perhaps more fully apprehend the Purport of our *Saviour's Discourse*, if we consider the several Designs he had to serve by it. First, he intended hereby to discourage these *Jews* who were ready to proclaim him their King, and put a Stop to their Design. This he did effectually: And this I take to be the main Reason of his delivering himself in such obscure and figurative Terms: By these Means he disappointed their Expectations, without denying himself to be the *Messiah*; on the contrary, he plainly signifies that he was the *Messiah*, though not such a one as they took him to be.

Secondly, he designed to raise Men's Minds from temporal things to spiritual things, and under sensible Images to convey to those, *who had Ears to hear*, most useful and important Doctrines. He fully declares himself the *Christ*: He calls God his *Father*; he says that *the Father hath sealed him, hath sent him*, that *he came down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World*; that *whoever feeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting Life*: He teaches them that the Benefits which he will confer on his Disciples, are not temporal, but future and spiritual: He exhorts them to *labour not for the Meat*

which perisheth, but for the Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life: He promises to give them *Life*, and to raise them up at the last Day: He tells them, as he had done in the Parable of the Sower, that the Efficacy of his Doctrine depended on the good Dispositions of those who heard it; that *all, that the Father giveth him, shall come to him*; that *no Man can come to him, except the Father draw him*; and that *every Man, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto him*. Accordingly, we find there were some who rightly understood him. Simon Peter in his own, and in the rest of the Apostles Name, answered—*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*. The Miracle of walking on the Sea was very seasonable, and necessary to preserve the Faith of this Apostle, and his Brethren, in this Time of Trial, and Offence to all those, who followed him on temporal Motives. Not only the Jews, but many of his Disciples were offended at his Doctrine, and Manner of Expression; but he knowing their Thoughts, explained himself, and satisfied their Scruples: *Doth this offend you?* (says he) *What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the Flesh profiteth nothing; the Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.* We may observe, that there were two things in

our *Lord's* Discourse, which gave Offence to his Hearers. First, they could not conceive how he could be said to *come down from Heaven*, who, they knew, was born among them. Secondly, they could not tell what he meant by *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*. Our *Lord* here obviates both these Objections. As to the First, he tells them that he should soon give them a sensible Proof that *he came down from Heaven*, by *ascending* up thither again in their Sight. As to the Second, he tells them that his Expressions are to be understood in a *spiritual* Sense: They could not indeed literally *eat his Flesh*, nor would it *profit them* any thing, if they could. But his Words were to be understood of the Nourishment of the inward Man, such as would improve the Soul, and preserve it to *eternal Life*; and his Doctrine was designed to take off their Thoughts and Cares from the Things of this World, and fix them on a more durable and solid Happiness in a better Life to come.

Lastly, Our *Saviour* seems here, as he frequently did on other Occasions, to have designed to lay before his Disciples several important Doctrines of *Christianity*, which, though at present wrapt up in Figure and Obscurity, would become more intelligible, when the Gospel-Scheme should come to be more fully unfolded. And therefore, as on another Occasion, he said to his Disciples—

*What*

*c What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter.* So here, though neither the *Jews* nor his own *Disciples*, might know at present the full Import of his Discourse, yet they would *know hereafter*, when his Ministry was fulfilled, <sup>d</sup> and they called to *Remembrance what he had said unto them.* And this, if I mistake not, is a Key which will let us into the Meaning and Design of those difficult Expressions of *eating the Flesh of the Son of the Son of Man, and drinking his Blood*, which, as they refer immediately to his feeding the Multitude, and to *Moses* feeding the Children of *Israel* with *Manna*, so they seem to carry a farther Allusion, both to his own Passion, and to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, whereby we profess our Faith in his Passion. <sup>e</sup> There is no small Agreement between this Discourse of our *Saviour* here, and his Conference with *Nicodemus*. In both he plainly signifies that he is the *Messiah*, but that his *Kingdom* was of a spiritual Nature. In both he sets forth the Necessity of a good Life, and declares that no one can come to him, without the previous Disposition of an honest and good Heart. There he says—*Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil*—and here—*No Man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.* In both he hints at his future Pas-

sion, and the Redemption of Mankind by his Death. There he says—*As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal Life*—and here he tells the Jews, that he shall give his Flesh for the Life of the World: And, as there was a plain Allusion to the Sacrament of *Baptism*, so here seems to be as plain an Allusion to the other Sacrament; and all this in such Expressions, and Figures, as arose from the present Occasions. Lastly, as our Saviour's Behaviour on that Occasion afforded us a strong Presumption, that he was no *Impostor*, or *Enthusiast*, so the same may be clearly inferred from his Treatment of these Jews. Here were five thousand Men ready to declare him their King; the *Passover* was at Hand; he might on this publick Occasion have made his Entry into *Jerusalem* in Triumph, supported by a numerous Party. Had he been actuated by a Spirit of *Enthusiasm*, he would not have declined such an offer: Persons of a warm Imagination always receive fresh Heat from the Concourse, the Approbation, and the Acclamations of Multitudes. Or, had he been an *Impostor*, what more favourable Opportunity could he desire? Would any *Impostor*, when like to be so powerfully supported, have left his Friends, and taken Pains to discourage, and alienate their Affections from him? No; both

*Impostors*

*Impostors* and *Enthusiasts* delight in a Number of Followers: Vanity prompts the one, and Interest the other, to use all Means to strengthen their Party, and gain Proselytes. But *Jesus* took quite another Method: *He sought not his own Glory*, or *Profit*; his sole Aim was to invite Men to the Practice of Virtue and Piety; and therefore he desired no Disciples, but such as were ready to embrace and practise his pure and heavenly Doctrines; all other Followers he constantly discouraged.

One thing more to be observed is, that as our *Saviour* throughout this whole Discourse gives sufficient Intimations that he is the *Christ*, so he accepts of the Professions of Faith made by his Apostles. When just before, his Disciples *came and worshipped him*, saying, *Of a Truth thou art the Son of God*, he did not decline, but accept this Homage and Declaration: When afterwards *Peter* said to him—*We believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*—we do not find that he corrected him, or intimated that he was mistaken: He answered—*Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is—Διάκριτος—an Accuser, or Informer.* Which Words, as they are an Instance of his Power of Prophecy, and Knowledge of Men's Hearts, so they seem to contain a Reason why he did not open himself more freely to them;

them; as if he had said—You say right; but I do not choose openly to declare so much, because one of you is an *Informer*, and would make it Matter of Accusation against me.

C H A P. V.

<sup>f</sup> **T**HIS Miracle of the Loaves was wrought just before the *Feast of the Passover*: But we have no Account of any of our Saviour's Transactions at this Passover. If he went up to this Feast, we may suppose he went up privately, and did not appear there openly. *His Name was now spread abroad*: He had just freed himself from the Importunity of the Multitude, who would have made him a King, while others were as highly exasperated against him, and sought his Life: And therefore it is reasonable to suppose he did not appear openly at this Feast. *His Hour was not yet come*; and he was equally afraid of the Zeal of his Followers, and the Malice of his Enemies. <sup>g</sup> Accordingly, St. John tells us that, *after these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*

<sup>f</sup> Joh. vi. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Joh. vii. 1.

<sup>h</sup> *Galilee*

<sup>b</sup> Galilee was therefore now the Place of his Abode: But here also the Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem pursued him. They sought some Occasion of incensing the People against him; and began to question him for allowing his Disciples to eat without first washing their Hands, contrary to the Tradition of the Elders. From hence our Lord takes Occasion to rebuke them severely, for teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, preferring ritual Observances to real Holiness, and even setting aside the Commandments of God by their Traditions. He instances in a Rule of theirs, which allowed a Son to consecrate his Substance to God, and, under that Pretence, to do nothing for his Parents. And he not only thus rebuked the Pharisees, but called to him the Multitude, and took Occasion from hence to recommend to them inward Holiness, and Purity of Heart, in Preference to all such outward Observances, telling them, that *not that which goeth into the Mouth defileth a Man, but that which cometh out of the Mouth.* The Pharisees were highly offended at his Behaviour and Doctrine; his Disciples, who probably were concerned at the Offence they took, informed him of it: *He answered, and said, Every Plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up—I must root out every Doctrine,*

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xv. 1, &c. Mar. vii. 1, &c.

which cometh not from God, but is founded on *the Commandments of Men*. Pay no regard to such Teachers, they are *blind Leaders*, and those that follow them implicitly are *blind* also : *And if the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch*. He afterwards explained his Doctrine more fully, and particularly to his *Disciples*.

<sup>i</sup> During this Summer Jesus went about through different Parts of Galilee, doing good, making *the Dumb to speak, the Maimed to be whole, the Lame to walk, and the Blind to see*, and *preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom*, in the same Manner he had done heretofore. <sup>k</sup> He sought Privacy, but would not turn away those who begged Relief from him. He healed *the Woman of Canaan's Daughter* : He made indeed at first some Difficulty of granting her Request ; but this was only that his Disciples might take more Notice, that *Faith* might be found in, and that *Compassion* was due, even to Strangers. <sup>l</sup> He healed a Man *who was deaf, and had an Impediment in his Speech* ; and, as he had done before on like Occasions, *charged them that they should tell no Man*. <sup>m</sup> The like Injunction he gave to the *blind Man* whom he healed at Bethsaida. He would not refuse the Mercy he asked ; but he first

<sup>i</sup> Matt. xv. 30, 31.      <sup>k</sup> Mar. vii. 24, &c.      Matt. xv. 21, &c.      <sup>l</sup> Mar. vii. 32, &c.      <sup>m</sup> Mar. viii. 22, &c.

led him out of the Town ; and when he had restored his Sight, sent him away with a Charge, neither to go into the Town, nor tell it to any in the Town. <sup>n</sup> Bethsaida had before despised his mighty Works, and stood out against Miracles sufficient to have converted the most idolatrous Nations ; and this might be a Reason, why here in particular he did not choose openly to display his Power.

<sup>o</sup> But in vain did he seek to be concealed. The People hearing of this, and other his Miracles, flocked about him in great Numbers. On these too he had Compassion. They had now been with him three days in the Wilderness, and had nothing to eat ; and divers of them came from far. Fearing therefore lest they might faint in their Way home for Want of Sustenance, he wrought the like Miracle for them, as he had done not long before, making seven Loaves, and a few little Fishes sufficient to feed 4000 Men, beside Women and Children : And they took up of the broken Meat that was left seven Baskets. He took also the same Precaution, as he had done before : He sent away the Multitude, and went by Ship into distant Parts.

<sup>p</sup> The Pharisees and Sadducees, seeing, and hearing the Fare of these mighty Miracles, and yet unwilling to be convinced, had Recourse to the

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xi. 21.    <sup>o</sup> Matt. xv. 32, &c. Mar. viii. 1, &c.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xvi. 1, &c. Mar. viii. 10, &c. See Page 124, and Page 58.

same Artifice, which they had once before tried: *They tempting him desired he would shew them a Sign from Heaven.* He gives them the same Answer he had done before—*A wicked and adulterous Generation seeketh after a Sign, and there shall no Sign be given unto it, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas.* At the same Time he rebuked them for pretending to *discern the Face of the Sky, and prognosticate the Weather,* and yet *not discerning the Signs of the Times.* Which Words plainly intimate that *the Time* they expected was come, and that *the Signs* of it were easily *discernible:* And yet it was such a Declaration of his divine Mission, as they could no Way lay hold on.

\* And now, the Time of his Departure drawing near, he thought proper to declare himself more openly to his Disciples. The Method he took to do this was a very prudent one. Being *alone* with some of his Apostles, he asked them what Men said of him, and what they took him to be. *They answered, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.* He asked them again their own Thoughts of him: *Simon Peter answered in the Name of the rest—Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* And Jesus answered and said unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it*

\* Matt. xvi. 13, &c. Mar. viii. 27, &c. Luk. ix. 18, &c.

unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. It appears plainly from this Passage, that our Saviour had not yet expressly declared himself the Christ, no not to his own Disciples. The People, we see, were in Doubt, and formed Conjectures concerning him, each according to his Fancy: Nor could he have had any Occasion to put such a Question to his Disciples, if he had before told them plainly who he was. His answer to Peter implies as much—<sup>r</sup> *Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee*—that is—No Man hath told thee this—but my Father, which is in Heaven: God enabled thee to gather and infer this Truth from my Life, and Doctrine, and Miracles. Our Saviour had indeed often (as has been already observed) plainly intimated as much; but he had never yet, as we can find, expressly declared himself the Christ, except only once, in the Absence of his Disciples, to the Woman of Samaria. He had taught the Jews, that the Kingdom of God was at Hand, that it was come unto them: He frequently appealed to his Miracles, and to the Prophecies of the Old Testament, for Proof of his Mission: He had said of himself, that he came down from Heaven to give Light unto the World: He had called God in a peculiar Manner his Father,

<sup>r</sup> See Gal. i. 16. Eph. vi. 12.

and

and declared that he had sealed him, and sent him: He had frequently used to speak in the third Person of *the Son, the Son of God*, but in such a Manner, as shewed plainly enough that he meant himself. But the Title by which he most usually distinguished himself was that of *the Son of Man*, an Appellation this, as it was the most modest and inoffensive he could well choose, so it carried with it (as we have seen) sufficient Intimation that he was the *Messiah*. When called *the Son of God*, or *the Christ*, by others, he never refused this Title, nor rebuked, or corrected, those who gave it him, though they were his own Disciples: When *Nathaniel* called him *the Son of God, the King of Israel*, he answered in such a Manner, as plainly shewed an Approbation of his Faith: "When his Disciples came and worshipped him, saying, Of a Truth thou art the Son of God; " when *Simon Peter* said—*We believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God*—he accepted this Homage, and these Professions. This Method our Saviour had hitherto taken of letting his Disciples know who he was; but he had never yet so positively declared himself the *Christ*, as he does now. He not only accepts of *Peter's* Confession, but declares it to be *revealed unto him by his Father which is in Heaven*; promises to *build his Church upon this Rock*, <sup>y</sup> and to make *Peter* an Officer, or

\* See P. 47, &c.      † Joh. i. 49, &c.      " Matt. xiv. 33.

<sup>x</sup> Joh. vi. 69.      <sup>y</sup> See *Hammond Annot.* Comp. If. xxii. 22.

Steward, who should carry the Keys, and bear Office, and Rule, in his Kingdom. And yet even this Declaration was guarded with all possible Prudence and Caution: He chose rather to draw this Confession from the Mouth of his Disciples, than to declare so much in express Terms himself: All this passed in private between him and his Disciples, or Apostles; and *them be straightly charged, and commanded them to tell no Man that he was the Christ.* At the same Time he instructs them that he *must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Elders, and of the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and after three Days rise again.* Thus did he join the Doctrine of his Sufferings with that of his Kingdom, by these Means checking those ambitious Hopes, which the foregoing Declaration might have raised.

There follows another Doctrine, which he had never plainly taught them before. <sup>2</sup> *From that Time forth (saith St. Matthew) began Jesus to shew unto his Disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things.* This Doctrine had been before delivered, but only under obscure Figures, which they did not at present understand—<sup>3</sup> *Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up.* <sup>4</sup> *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.* <sup>5</sup> *The Bread that I*

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 21, &c. Mar. viii. 31, &c. Luk. ix. 22, &c. <sup>3</sup> Joh. ii. 19. <sup>4</sup> Joh. iii. 14. <sup>5</sup> Joh. vi. 51.

*will give is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World.* But now he spake that Saying—ἐν ταρπησίᾳ—plainly, without any Figure. The Reason why he had not more plainly taught them this Lesson before, is sufficiently manifest from what has been already observed—they were not able to bear it. A suffering *Messiah* was at that Time such a Paradox as would have been almost universally rejected with Scorn. His most zealous Disciples, if he had at first plainly told them what he was to suffer, would probably have gone back, and walked no more with him. And therefore Jesus, who would not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax, adapted his Doctrine to their Infirmities. He would not unnecessarily offend them, and therefore be fed them with Milk, and not with Meat; preaching the Word as they were able to bear it, and preparing their Minds for the Reception of such Truths as these by gentle Degrees. They had been for some Time now Witnesses of his Life and Miracles; they had been Auditors of his heavenly Discourses, all tending to enforce on them inward Purity of Heart, and to take off their Affections from this World: They were now fully persuaded that he was the *Christ*, and St. Peter in the Name of the rest had made Confession of him. This therefore he thought a proper Season to acquaint them more fully with his future Sufferings. <sup>a</sup> He had before taught them,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. x. 22, &c.

that they must be *hated of all Men* for his Name's sake ; but that he himself should be rejected of the *Elders and Chief Priests*, and be killed ; this was still a harder Lesson for them : They could by no means relish a Doctrine so repugnant to their Notions, and so destructive of their Hopes : Peter therefore took upon him to rebuke his Master, saying—*Be it far from thee Lord ; this shall not be unto thee.* But our Saviour reproved him with no small Severity—*Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* And still to the last we find them averse to this Doctrine. When Jesus soon after repeated the same thing to them, <sup>•</sup> *they were exceeding sorry* (says St. Matthew). <sup>‘</sup> *They understood not that Saying, and were afraid to ask him* (says St. Mark). <sup>•</sup> And again, when Jesus foretold his Sufferings just before his Decease, *they understood none of these things, and this Saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.* Had Jesus been an Impostor, he might possibly have had some forebodings of his sufferings : He might reasonably have expected severe Treatment from the Jewish Rulers. But would such a Person have *spoken this Saying openly ?* When his Disciples had just acknowledged his Pretensions, would he have checked their rising Hopes, and damped their

<sup>•</sup> Matt. xvii. 23.

<sup>‘</sup> Mar. ix. 32.

<sup>•</sup> Luk. xiii. 34.

Zeal, with an unseasonable Prediction of his own and their Sufferings? Would he, or could he, have foretold *what Death he should die?* When we find our *Lord* declaring (<sup>b</sup> as he did afterwards), that *he should be delivered to the Gentiles*, (who had as yet taken no Notice of him), *to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him*, (things not likely to happen, nor at that Time likely to enter into the Imagination of either Impostor, or Enthusiast), and when we find the Event exactly according with the Prediction, have we not the greatest Reason to conclude, that *this is of a Truth that Prophet that should come into the World?*

Peter's Confession, our Saviour's Acceptance of it, his Prediction of his Sufferings, and his Reprimand of Peter, seem to have passed in private between him and his *Disciples*, or Apostles.<sup>i</sup> But he now *calls the People unto him*, and preaches to them the same Doctrine of Self-denial,<sup>k</sup> which he had before taught his Apostles, but makes no mention of his Sufferings. *He said to them all, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his Life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his Life for my Sake shall find it. For what is a Man*

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xx. 19. Mar. x. 33, 34. Luk. xviii. 32, 33.

<sup>i</sup> Matt. xvi. 24, &c. Mar. viii. 34, &c. Luk. ix. 23, &c.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. x. 38, 39.

profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? The Expression of taking up the Cross, seems to be a Phrase used to signify the submitting to Affliction and Persecution; but was certainly designed to allude to the Death which he himself, and some also of his Disciples, should die.<sup>1</sup> That the Words following relate to a future State, appears from comparing them with Job. xii. 25, as also with Matt. x. 28, &c. But as this Doctrine must be ungrateful to his Hearers, to qualify the Harshness of it, he adds—*For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father with his Angels; and then he shall reward every Man according to his Works.* And, lest his Disciples should take Offence, being put off to a distant and uncertain Time, he farther tells them, that *there were some standing there, who should not taste of Death, till they had seen the Kingdom of God come with Power.* The Kingdom of God<sup>m</sup> (as we have seen), with regard to the Time of its Commencement, bears in Scripture different Senses.<sup>n</sup> The Event has taught us to interpret this

<sup>1</sup> See above P. 140.      <sup>m</sup> Page 75.      <sup>n</sup> Comp. Joh. xxi. 22, 23, &c. Some have thought that our Lord here refers to his *Transfiguration*, the Account of which follows immediately after. The Words may indeed bear this Sense: Our Saviour, after foretelling that he should hereafter come to judge the *World in Power and Glory*, might in the following Words signify to his Disciples, that some of them should soon see an

latter Passage of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, when *Christ* most remarkably displayed his Regal Power in the Punishment of his Enemies the *Jews*. The Sense of the whole is, that the Day would come, (meaning the last Day of Judgment), when he should appear in Glory to reward his faithful Followers, and punish those who opposed or forsook him ; and that even in this present Generation, he should come with Power to support his faithful Followers, and punish his Enemies. The Words must at that Time appear obscure, nor were they to be fully understood till the Event should clear up their Meaning ; but were well calculated to prevent his Disciples from desponding, and at the same Time make them willing to wait his own Time of *coming with Power and Glory*. These Words also plainly signify to the People that he was the *Messiah*, their *King*, and yet are so cautiously delivered, as to afford his Enemies no Matter of Accusation against him. He speaks in the third Person of the *Son of Man* : He speaks of a distant Day when this *Son of Man* was to *come in his Kingdom* ; and promises to his Followers at present only

Earnest and Foretaste of this his glorious Appearance. Accordingly St. Peter brings this in Proof of his coming to Judgment : *For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-Witnesses of his Majesty, &c.* 2 Pet. i. 16. See Poole's Synops. Macknight's Harm.

Sufferings

Sufferings and Death: And the whole is so obscurely worded, as that neither his Friends nor Enemies could make any ill Use of it. Thus guarded was our Saviour in every thing which he said with Relation to his Kingdom\*.

Not long after, he gave his Disciples a farther and more striking Assurance that he was the Christ. <sup>P</sup> He took three of his Apostles apart into an high Mountain: And while he was there in Prayer, he was transfigured before them; his whole Body put on a luminous Appearance, his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light. And there appeared in Glory, Moses, and Elias, talking with him. The three Disciples were astonished at this Vision, and Peter said, Lord, <sup>q</sup> it is well we are here; meaning perhaps, that their Presence was necessary to administer to, and provide for, these Guests. But what he meant by the following Words—Let us make here three Tabernacles, &c. whether these Tabernacles were to be for the Reception of these Persons, or for the Worship of them, we need not enquire, for we are told that he himself knew not what he said. But while he yet spake, a bright Cloud overshadowed them, and a Voice came out of the Cloud, saying, This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well

\* See Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 106, &c.

<sup>P</sup> Matt. xvii. 1, &c. Mar. ix. 2. Luk. ix. 28, &c.

<sup>q</sup> καλόν εστιν οὗτος ὁ γιος μου.

*pleased; bear ye him.* This was a most extraordinary Manifestation of himself, and most fully convinced these Disciples that he was the *Christ*. But one Difficulty still remained with them: They had been taught that *Elias* was first to come before the *Messiah*. They had now seen *Elias* with our *Saviour*, but were surprised at his sudden Departure; and therefore they *asked him*, *Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come?* To this Objection Jesus answered, that *Elias was come already, and they knew him not, but had done unto him whatever they listed.* <sup>1</sup> He had taught them some time before, that *John was the Elias which was for to come*; and therefore they easily comprehended that *he spake unto them of John the Baptist*. But it is observable, that this full Manifestation of our *Saviour* was qualified with the same Cautions as the last. As *Moses and Elias in this Vision spake of our Saviour's Decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem*, so he himself told them, that *the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be set at nought.* <sup>2</sup> And soon after, when he had healed the Dæmoniack, and his Disciples were amazed at the mighty Power of God, he repeated the Lesson to them. Again, as this Manifestation was made only to three of his Apostles, in whom he could most confide, so he charged them to tell the Vision to no Man, till the Son of Man was

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 14, &c.      <sup>2</sup> Luk. ix. 43, &c.

*risen from the Dead.* This last Clause may point out to us the Reason of this Caution. These things were not designed to be concealed ; but only the Publication of them was to be deferred till the proper Season. His Disciples were not yet weaned from their Notions of a temporal Deliverer : They might perhaps, if not laid under such Restraints, have thought themselves authorized to set up their *Messiah's* Standard : The Populace (as we have seen) were ready on the least Encouragement to *make him their King* : The Pharisees and Rulers were violently exasperated against him, and would readily have laid hold of any Matter of Accusation : And therefore the open Publication of this glorious Attestation of his Mission, at this unseasonable Conjuncture might have been of dangerous Consequence. <sup>1</sup> *His Time was not yet full come,* and his Death was to be brought about in such Seasons, and by such Steps, as might most effectually vindicate his Innocency, and attest his Mission. He therefore forbids his Disciples to tell *what things they had seen, till he was risen from the Dead*, when their Testimony was more likely to be received, and he himself should be removed out of their Reach, safe from the Malice of his Enemies, and the Zeal of his Friends, out of all Sus-

<sup>1</sup> Joh. vii. 8.

picion, or Danger of being proclaimed a temporal King.

\* When Jesus came down from the Mountain, and returned to the rest of the Disciples, he saw a great Multitude about them, and the Scribes questioning with them. A Person whose only Son was possessed with an evil Spirit, had brought him to these Disciples to be cured. \* They had before received Power to cast out Devils; but possibly, as Jesus and the three chief of them were now absent, they might be afraid to attempt it, or at least might attempt it with Doubt and Diffidence; and this occasioned a Dispute between them and the Scribes. This Case has generally been brought in Proof that Dæmoniacks were no other than Epilepticks, most of the Symptoms here mentioned being such as are common in that Distemper. ' But it is not only said, that the Spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him, but we are told that Jesus rebuked the foul Spirit, and spoke to it, saying, Thou dumb and deaf Spirit. Besides, the Wonder and Amazement, which every one expressed, shew that this was no common Epilepsy; for in that case Time only could have shewn that the Person was cured. The Appearance of Jesus put an End to the Dispute between the Scribes and his Disciples. The People

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xvii. 14. Mar. ix. 14, &c. Luk. ix. 37, &c.

\* Matt. x. 8. <sup>y</sup> See above p. 80, 81.

and

and Father of the Dæmoniack immediately applied to him. He rebuked the Scribes who had been questioning with his Disciples for their Incredulity, and told the Father, that, *if he could believe, all things were possible to him that believeth.* He cried out, and said with Tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief.* Jesus then rebuked the foul Spirit, and commanded him to come out of the Child, and enter no more into him. The Spirit, having first thrown him into Agonies, so that he was in Appearance dead, departed out of him. Jesus took him by the Hand, and lifted him up, and delivered him to his Father perfectly cured. And they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God. Then came the Disciples to Jesus apart, and asked him, why they could not cast him out: He told them it was because of their Unbelief; which seems to imply that they had Power given them to cast out such Spirits, but had not Faith to make Use of it, as they should have done.

\* Our Saviour adds—*Τέτο δὲ τὸ γένος ἐν εποιεῖσθαι, εἰ μὲν ἐν προσευχῇ οὐ μείζω—*which may not unfitly be applied to the Faith mentioned before, and may signify that the Faith necessary to perform such Miracles, could not proceed, or be obtained, without earnest Application to God by Prayer and Fasting,

\* See Knatchbull Annot.

<sup>a</sup> Our Lord, though he was always ready to compassionate, and relieve such miserable Objects, as applied to him, yet took Care to do it without Noise, or Tumult. Having performed this extraordinary Miracle, to the *Amazement* of all who were Witnesses to it, he immediately departed thence, and retired into Galilee, and he would not that any Man should know it. For the same Reason he again put his Disciples in Mind of his Death and Sufferings ; but they were very unwilling to believe, and slow to understand, such Doctrine. <sup>b</sup> They had before questioned one with another what the *Rising from the Dead* should mean ; <sup>c</sup> and they were now again exceeding sorry, and understood not this Saying, and it was hid from them and they perceived it not, and they feared to ask him of that Saying.

<sup>d</sup> When he was come to Capernaum, they that received Tribute-Money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay Tribute ? This Tribute-Money is in the Original called—*τὰ διδεγχυα*—which is the Money paid for the Use of the Temple. This was a Tax which the Chief Priests levied on every Jew, though they do not seem to have had Power to compel the Payment of it ; and therefore the Receivers ask Peter—Doth not your Master pay Tribute ? Jesus, knowing what had passed be-

<sup>a</sup> Mar. ix. 30. <sup>b</sup> Mar. ix. 10. <sup>c</sup> Matt. xvii. 23. Luk. ix. 45. <sup>d</sup> Matt. xvii. 24, &c. See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.*

tween these Officers and Peter, as soon as he came into the House, prevented him, saying, *What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the Kings of the Earth take Custom, or Tribute, of their own Children, or of Strangers?* This Tribute-Money was a Tax paid to God; and therefore our Saviour argues that, as no Kings obliged their own Sons, or Families to pay Tribute, he, being the Son of God, was free, and exempt, from this Tax. However, he orders Peter, lest they should give Offence, to pay the Tribute, and enables him by a Miracle to find the Money. *Notwithstanding, says he, lest we should offend them, go thou to the Sea, and cast an Hook, and take up the Fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his Mouth, thou shalt find a Piece of Money, that take, and give unto them for me and thee.* Thus did our Lord at once assure Peter that he was the Son of God, and instruct both him, and us, that we ought not, on any Pretence of any, even the highest, religious Prerogatives, to disobey or give Offence, to our Superiors, or Governors, in Church or State.

We have frequently had Occasion to observe, with what Caution, and Circumspection, our Saviour demeaned himself even among his own Disciples: And we shall see that he had but too much Reason for such Caution. He had just now given them strong Assurances that he was the Messiah. And

• And immediately arose a high *Dispute among them, who should be the greatest in his Kingdom.* This happened in their *Way to Capernaum*, in private *among themselves*: Jesus, knowing their *Thoughts*, and most private Discourse, *asked them, what was it that they disputed among themselves by the Way?* At first they held their *Peace*, being unwilling to own it; but at last they seem to have confessed (*Matt. xviii. 1.*) that their Question was, *Who should be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?* But our *Saviour* reproved their ambitious *Thoughts*: *He called a little Child unto him, and set him in the midst of them*, and told them that the *Way to be greatest in his Kingdom, was to humble themselves as this little Child*; nay, that they *should not enter at all into the Kingdom of Heaven*, should have no Share in his *Kingdom, except they were converted*; unless they divested themselves of all *Pride, Ambition, and worldly Views*, and became *humble as this little Child*. And in order to prevent such ambitious Contentions, he inculcates the Duties of *Humility, Meekness, and Forgiveness of Injuries*: He cautions them *not to despise, or offend, any the meanest Person*; he tells them, *that whosoever shall receive one such little Child in his Name*; who for his Sake shall shew any Kindness, or compassion, to any such humble Person, however mean his Rank or

• *Matt. xviii. 1, &c. Mar. ix. 33, &c. Luk. ix. 46, &c.*

Circumstances are, receiveth him ; that the *Angels*, who stand in the Presence of *God*, watch over such Persons ; that *the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost* ; and that *it is not the Will of our Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish*. He proceeds to set forth the Danger of *Offences*, and exhorts his Disciples, carefully to avoid all things which might be an Occasion of Sin, either to others, or themselves. He repeats the same Doctrine <sup>f</sup> which he had before taught them in his Sermon in the Mount, that *it is better for them to enter into Life halt, or maimed, than to be cast into Hell, where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*. <sup>g</sup> The Expressions are borrowed from *Isaiah* : The Prophet represents the Case of hardened Sinners under the Similitude of Persons slain in Battle ; and he herein alludes to the two different Ways of burying the Dead then in Use: Some were interred in the Earth, and were eaten up of *Worms*, which die when their Food fails ; others were burnt on a Funeral Pile, which was extinguished of itself, when the Fuel was consumed. But it shall not be so with the wicked ; *their Worm shall not die, and their Fire shall not be quenched* ; their Punishment shall be of endless Duration. What follows is difficult—*For every*

<sup>f</sup> Matt. v. 29, &c. See If. lxvi. 24.  
Harmon.

<sup>g</sup> See Macknight's

one shall be salted with Fire, and every Sacrifice shall be salted with Salt : <sup>b</sup> Our Lord seems to allude to the different Kinds of Sacrifices, *Burnt-Offerings* and *Peace-Offerings* : To the First he compares the Wicked—πᾶς γὰς πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται—*Burnt-Offerings* were consumed whole by the *Fire*: And so all the Wicked—πᾶς γὰς—all those spoken of before were to suffer the *Vengeance of eternal Fire*. The Word ἀλισθήσεται, seems here to bear a double Signification, in Conformity to the Hebrew Word נמלח—which signifies both to be *salted*, and to be *consumed*: Our *Saviour* therefore here would teach us, that all wicked Men shall be like *Burnt-Offerings*, *consumed by Fire*; but that all good Men shall be like other *Sacrifices*, *salted with Salt*, seasoned with Virtue and Piety. There follows a proverbial Expression, <sup>i</sup> which he had before employed on a like Occasion—*Salt is good; but if the Salt have lost its Saltness, wherewith will you season it?* If *Christians*, who ought to be the *Salt of the Earth*, themselves thoroughly *seasoned* with every Grace and Virtue, and instrumental also in *seasoning* others, if these are found corrupted, they are of all Men most inexcusable. And then, to return to the Subject he was on, he adds—*Have Salt in yourselves, and have Peace one with another:* Keep yourselves pure and uncorrupted; and give

<sup>b</sup> See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.* <sup>i</sup> Matt. v. 13.

no Offence to any of your Brethren. And in order to preserve Peace among his Disciples, he commands them, after the Example of their heavenly Father, to seek the *Sheep* which is gone astray. If their Brother trespass against them, he directs them first to try private Admonition: If that will not reclaim him, they must call in two or three Friends, and use their Interest, and Influence, to bring him to a Sense of his Fault: If this does not prove successful, they are then to complain <sup>k</sup> to the Church, that is to the Christian Congregation, of which they are Members; and if he neglect to hear the Church, they must then give him over as incorrigible, avoid all Intercourse with him, and look upon him as the Jews did on *Heathens and Publicans*. Our Lord adds, that the Sentence passed by such Congregation shall be ratified in Heaven, and that he himself is in the Midst of any

<sup>k</sup> The Word Ἐκκλησία originally signifies any Assembly of People (Acts xix. 32, 39.): From hence it became appropriated to signify an Assembly met for the Worship and Service of God (Acts xi. 26. 1 Cor. xi. 18. Heb. ii. 12.); And from hence it was transferred to the Body of Christians in general, (in the same Manner as the Congregation of Israel signifies the whole Nation of the Jews in the Old Testament), Matt. xvi. 18. Acts v. 11. Eph. i. 22. v. 23, &c. Col. i. 18, 24. or any Part of this Society, settled in any particular Place. Acts viii. 1. xv. 41. Rom. xvi. 5, 16. 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Cor. viii. 1. xi. 28. Rev. i. 4, &c.

Assembly gathered together in his Name, be their Number great or small. Peter, thinking perhaps that this Doctrine of Forgiveness of Injuries was a hard Lesson, asked our Saviour, how oft his Brother might sin against him, and he forgive him: Till seven Times?—as much as to say—What, must my Brother be for ever injuring me, and I ever<sup>1</sup> forgive him? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven Times, but until seventy times seven: And by a Parable of a King's forgiving one of his Servants, a Debt of ten thousand Talents, he shewed him both the Reasonableness, and the Necessity, of forgiving our Christian Brethren, if we ourselves expect any Forgiveness at God's Hands. These were the Doctrines of the Blessed Jesus: Let any serious Person impartially and carefully examine them; let him consider who it is that teaches them, Jesus of Nazareth, a Man of low Birth, and mean Education; when also they were taught to expect, when the whole Nation actually did expect, a temporal Deliverer; when all around him, even his own Disciples, were warm with the Hopes of Advancement, vain, ambitious, and contentious, impatiently waiting for the Day when their Master should enter on his Kingdom; and he himself alone meek, and lowly in Spirit, a Preacher, and an Example of Peace, Goodness, and Forbearance;

<sup>1</sup> See Luk. xvii. 4.

Let every one consider this, and judge for himself, whether these Doctrines be of God, or whether the Preacher spoke them of himself.

<sup>m</sup> Whilst he was engaged in this Discourse, *John* told him, that they had seen one casting out Devils in his Name, and they forbade him, because he followed not them. It is not said who this Person was; possibly he might be a Disciple of *John*, who seeing wonderful Miracles performed by our *Lord's* Disciples in their Master's Name, might attempt the like, and *God* might prosper such Attempt, and work Miracles on such Invocation, thereby to bear the stronger Attestation to the Name of *Jesus*. Our *Lord*, not willing to discourage any Degree of Faith, or any hopeful Tendency, rebukes his Disciples for what they had done: *For* (says he) *he that is not against us, is for us*. He adds—*Whoever shall give you a Cup of Water to drink in my Name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his Reward*. The Expression is remarkable—in my Name, because ye belong to Christ—and is a plain, though not a direct, Declaration that he was the Christ, <sup>n</sup> and is perhaps the first Time that he spoke of him-

<sup>m</sup> Mar. ix. 38, &c. Luk. ix. 49, &c. <sup>n</sup> See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 110. but if we take his Words as St. *Mattew* relates them, Chap. xvi. 20. this is an Exception.

self to his Disciples, under the Name of the *Messiah*, or *Christ*.

° Our Saviour now had not appeared publickly at *Jerusalem* for a Year and half, when the *Feast of Tabernacles* drew near. Some of his Relations, who did not believe in him, upbraided him with this private and reserved Way of Behaviour: They said unto him, Depart hence, and go into *Judæa*, that thy Disciples also may see the Works that thou doest: For there is no Man that doeth any thing in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly, to appear in a publick Character: If thou do these things, shew thyself to the *World*. These Brethren of our Saviour might possibly have some Notions of his being the *Messiah*; but they were offended at the Privacy, and Obscurity, of his Life: This they thought inconsistent with the Character he seemed to assume; and therefore they did not believe on him, but called upon him to shew himself more publickly to the *World*, and perform his Miracles in *Jerusalem*, before the whole Nation: Till his Title was more publickly recognized, they did not choose to own him. His Answer was, that his Time was not yet come; that they might go up to the *Feast* when they pleased, having nothing to fear from a wicked World, but that he had, and therefore should not go up yet unto this *Feast*.

\* Joh. vii. 2, &c.

*Jesus*

¶ Jesus knew their Dispositions, and therefore did not choose to adventure himself in their Company, but staid behind in Galilee, till after they were gone up to Jerusalem, and then he also went up to the Feast, but in a private Manner. ¶ St. Luke expresses it—Ἐγένετο δὲ, ἐν τῷ συμπληρῶν τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐσκείχετο προφεύεις Ἰερουαλάμῳ. He had for some Time forbore to walk in Jewry, and retired into Galilee, to avoid the Fury of the Jews, who sought to kill him; but now, as the Time of his Passion drew near, he stedfastly set his Face, armed himself with Courage, and resolved boldly to face the Dangers, which threatened him at Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> In his Way he was to pass through a Village of the Samaritans; but they, understanding he was to go to worship at Jerusalem at the Feast, refused to receive him: His zealous Disciples, provoked at this Treatment, desired Power to command Fire from Heaven, to consume them, even as Elias did. But Jesus rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of: He was not such a Messiah as they vainly imagined him to be: He came not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them. And accordingly he turned aside peaceably into another Village.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke relates some other Incidents, as hap-

¶ Joh. vii. 9, 10.

¶ Luk. ix. 51.

¶ Luk. ix. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Luk. ix. 57, &c. Matt. viii. 19, &c.

pening

pening in their Way to Jerusalem. *A certain Man came and said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest:* Jesus, who knew his Heart, and what Motives induced him, *said unto him, Foxes have Holes, and Birds of the Air have Nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head;* thereby designing to teach him, that he was not such a *Messiah* as he looked for; that if he sought for worldly Profit, or Advantage, he was come to a wrong Person. And this his Answer seems to have had the intended Effect; we do not find that this Man thought any more of following him. *Christus (says Grotius) paupertatem suam profitens, ipsum hominis ulcus tetigit.*

Two others there were, whom Jesus called to be his Disciples; but they made Excuses: One desired *first to go and bury his Father*; (*i. e.* probably, to attend his aged Father, and stay till after his Death, and then afterwards he should be at Liberty to follow Jesus); but Jesus *said unto him, Let the Dead bury their Dead.* This seems to be a proverbial Expression, and is here applied to signify to this Person, that the Office of attending his Father might be performed by others, who were more at Liberty; but that *he*, being called upon by Christ, to attend his Service, must mind only this, and that to this, all other Duties, even those to our nearest Relations, must give Place. Our

*Saviour's*

Saviour's Answer to the other Person is much to the same Purpose: He desired Time to take Leave of his Relations, and Household: But *Jesus said unto him, No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.* We read immediately after, of our Lord's sending out *seventy Disciples*; these two Persons might possibly be of the Number of those he thought to employ on this Occasion—*Go thou, and preach the Kingdom of God,* said he to one of them: If so, this may be the Reason why he so peremptorily required their Attendance in Preference to other, the most necessary, Duties.

\* These *seventy Disciples* were sent out with much the same Instructions, and Commission, as the *twelve Apostles* had been before. There seem to have been two Reasons for sending them at this Time: Our *Saviour* was now going up to *Jerusalem*, in as private a Manner as might be; he therefore dismissed the greater Part of his Followers, and seems to have gone to *Jerusalem*, attended only by a few: He designed also to take a Circuit round the Country, after the Feast was over; he therefore *sent* these Disciples, *two and two into every City, and Place, whither he himself would come*, to prepare Men for the Reception of his Person, and Doctrine. He had been but little in *Judæa*; and

\* Luk. x. 1, &c.

his Time was now short, and therefore he might think this Method necessary, for the Instruction of those, whom the Light of the Gospel had not yet reached.

" We have in the seventh Chapter of St. John, a most natural Description of the Disposition of the Jews at Jerusalem, when Jesus came there at the Feast, and of the Effects, which his Miracles, and Doctrine had had upon them. The Pharisees, and their Adherents, a strong Party, were bitterly exasperated against him : The Meanness of his Birth and Appearance, had sufficiently prejudiced them against him ; and their worldly, and carnal Dispositions had made them incapable of listening to his Doctrines, or receiving him for their *Messiah*: Besides, the little Regard which he paid to their Traditions, which they esteemed equally with the Law itself, and the Speeches which he on all Occasions threw out against them, and their Doctrines, had highly incensed them : And therefore they strove to account for his Miracles ; and were willing to ascribe them to any thing, rather than his divine Power : " And the Credit he hereby gained among the People, served only the more to alarm them, made them look upon him as a dangerous Enemy, one whom it concerned them to suppress, and destroy, in Regard to their own Credit, and Interest.

\* Joh. vii. 11, &c.      ▪ Mar. xi. 18.

But two things for some Time restrained them from offering him any Violence: \* *They feared the People*; and they wanted proper Matter of Accusation against him: \* *They had no Power themselves to put him to Death*; and they could find no Crime to accuse him of before the *Roman Governor*. Such was the Innocence of his Life, and so prudent and cautious had been his Conduct, that they could lay nothing to his Charge. As to the People, they were in great Suspence, and very much divided in their Sentiments concerning him: His Miracles, and Doctrine, had gained him a general Credit and Esteem: \* Many looked on him as a *great Prophet*; others thought that he was the *Christ*; but, as they expected a temporal *Messiah*, the Meanness of his Appearance, and his Privacy and Reservedness, kept them still in Doubt and Suspence. Few believed on him on right Principles: However, the wonderful Works which both he himself, and his Disciples had wrought, had caused a general Alarm. There was great Expectation, and Enquiry, made after him, at this Feast, and much murmuring among the People concerning him: *For some said, he is a good Man; others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the People: But no Man (we are told) spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.* \* The Jewish Rulers, I suppose, had threatened to excommuni-

\* Luk. xx. 19. xxii. 2. Matt. xxvi. 5. \* Joh. xviii. 31.

\* Matt. xvi. 14. Luk. vii. 16. Joh. vii. 40, 41. \* See Joh. ix. 22.

cate, and punish those, who confessed that he was the Christ ; and therefore his Favourers did not care to speak their Minds too freely.

¶ Things being at this Crisis, Jesus at last, about the midst of the Feast, appeared publickly, and went up into the Temple, and taught. What he taught at this Time is no where recorded ; but his Doctrine was such as very much affected, and surprised, his Hearers. The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this Man Letters, having never learned ? To this Jesus answered, that his Doctrine was not his own, but his that sent him ; and tells them, that virtuous and good Men, such as did the Will of God, would easily perceive whether his Doctrine were of God, or whether he spoke of himself. And, knowing the Jews were offended at his Reservedness, he intimates that this was an Argument of his Sincerity : Impostors always seek their own Glory : Since therefore he did not seek his own Glory, but His Glory that sent him, this was a Proof that he was true, and that there was no Unrighteousness in him. He adds the Reason why they were so unwilling to receive his Doctrine, because they did not the Will of God, nor kept the Law, which they so much boasted in ; but, contrary to Law and Justice, went about to kill him. Our Lord (as appears by what follows) here

¶ Joh. vii. 14, &c.

meant<sup>c</sup> to refer to their Attempt against his Life, when he was last at *Jerusalem*, on Account of the Cure wrought by him on the Sabbath-day; <sup>d</sup> but he might possibly have a farther Meaning, and design to hint, that some of them had then bloody Intentions against him. *The People* treated this Charge with Contempt; they thought it a Sign of Madness, to fancy that Plots were laid against his Life, and said, *Thou hast a Devil; who goeth about to kill thee?* But our *Lord* justified his Charge, referring them to their late Attempt against his Life, when he healed the impotent Man at the Pool of *Bethesda*. He tells them *he had done one Work* among them, and it moved their Resentment, because done on the Sabbath-Day: He shewed, from their own Practice of *Circumcision*, that Works of Necessity and Charity might be done on this Day, and exhorted them not to judge according to the first Appearance of things, but to consider every thing coolly and impartially, and judge righteous Judgment. The Jews, instead of attending to his Reasoning, still continued to deride him—*Is not this* (said they in Mockery) *he whom they seek to kill?* And yet he teacheth openly, and no Man meddles with him, or says any thing to him. Are our Rulers also convinced, that this is the very Christ? (ironically intimating, that

<sup>c</sup> Joh. v. 16.<sup>d</sup> See Joh. viii. 37.

those who were the best Judges, and whose Authority ought to weigh with others, would not allow his Pretensions): *Howbeit* (said they, as it were again correcting themselves) *we know this Man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no Man knoweth whence he is.* These Cavils seem to have been whispered about privately; but Jesus answered them publickly, *as he taught in the Temple.* To their Ironies he said nothing, but to their Arguments he answered—Καὶ μὲν οἴδατε, οὐ δέ πότεν εἰμί—<sup>c</sup> which Words may be best read with an Interrogation—Do you know me, and do you know whence I am? as much as to say, You are mistaken, you know not whence I am—καὶ οὐποτενεστές οὐκ εἰλικρυῖα—*but I am not come of myself, I entered not into this Ministry on my own private Motion—*ἀλλ' ἐστιν αὐλανθίως ὁ πέμψας με, οὐ δύμεστις οὐκ οἴδατε—*Aulanthiōs* seems to signify here, as in Job. v. 20, *the true God*, and the Words may be rendered—*but it was the true God who sent me, whom ye know not, of whom you have no right Notions—*Ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδεν αὐτὸν, οὐτὶ παρ' αὐτῷ εἰμι, οὐδενὶός με ἀπέσειλεν—*But I know him, for I am from him, (or I know that I came from him), and he hath sent me.* This so plain a Declaration offended the Jews; and they sought to take him: But no Man (we are told) laid Hands on him, because his Hour was not yet come. The Time fore-

<sup>c</sup> See Grotii Annot.

ordained by God for his Passion, was not yet come ; and therefore God's Providence preserved him from their Attempts till that Time was fulfilled. But God's Providence (as we shall see) wrought chiefly by natural and human Means. The Credit he had obtained among the People, and the Want of Matter of Accusation against him, restrained for some Time the Fury of his Enemies. Though some were offended, and desirous of laying Hands on him, yet *many of the People believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more Miracles than these, which this Man hath done?* These Discourses were overheard by some of the Pharisees, who were alarmed, and thought it Time to put a Stop to his Proceedings : They sent therefore Officers to take him ; but he still continued preaching publickly. He intimated to the People, that he should soon be taken from them, but in such obscure Terms, that they could not understand him—*Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me ; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

<sup>f</sup> These Words seem to be addressed to *the Officers*, who were sent to take him, and might be designed to intimate to them, that he knew their Errand ; that in a little Time he should leave them ; but that as yet their Attempts were vain. This Address might very probably startle these Officers.

<sup>g</sup> In the last Day, that great Day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any Man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water. The Jewish Writers inform us, that on this last Day of the Feast of Tabernacles it was usual to pour Water on the Altar, to denote their praying then for the Blessing of Rain, the latter Rain, which was then wanted against their approaching Seed-time. This Water they drew out of Siloah, and brought it with great Pomp, and Ceremony, to the Temple, playing with their Instruments, and singing, and repeating the Words of the Prophet—<sup>h</sup> With Joy shall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation. Jesus therefore, according to his usual Custom, takes Occasion from hence to instruct the People, and applies this Ceremony, and this Scripture to himself. He signifies to them, that the Water here spoken of was to be had from him alone—If any Man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink: And he explains what he means by coming unto him—He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water. The Word κοιλία, here translated Belly, signifies any hollow Receptacle, and may properly be used for such Cisterns, or Reser-

<sup>g</sup> Joh. vii. 27, &c. See Hammond, Grotii Annot. Lightfoot Hor. Heb. Whithby, Tremellii Annot. <sup>h</sup> Is. xii. 3.

voirs, as were usually built to receive the Waters issuing from their Fountains. The Meaning then may be, that every true Believer shall, according to the Purport of this *Scripture* repeated by the People on this Occasion, abound with *living Water*, shall have within him such a *Cistern*, which will supply *living Water*, both for his own and others Use. What is signified by *Water* we are informed in the next Verse, viz. the Gifts of *the Spirit*: These Gifts are very properly represented under the Figure of *Water*, both by Reason of the plentiful Effusion, and the salutary Effects of them. *Water* indeed is often used in *Scripture* by a common Metaphor, and a very apposite one in that hot thirsty Country, for Knowledge, Happiness, or any good Gift. The same Metaphor our *Lord* makes Use of, Job. iv. 10. <sup>1</sup> And in the prophetick Writings, it is often peculiarly used to signify the Gifts and Graces of the *Spirit*, to be conferred under the Evangelical Dispensation.

We are not to imagine that the *Evangelist* in this Chapter gives us the whole of our *Saviour's* Discourse, but only some general Heads, his Manner of preaching, and his Application of this Ceremony, and this *Scripture* to himself. \* And he afterwards informs us, that *the People* were very much affected

<sup>1</sup> See Is. xli. 18. xliv. 3. lv. 1. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.  
Zech. xiv. 8. Rev. xxi. 6. \* Joh. vii. 40, &c.

with his preaching: Many, when they heard the Word—*ἀκούσατε τὸν λόγον*—said, of a Truth this is the Prophet; others said, This is the Christ: But some objected that he came out of Galilee, whereas Christ was to be of the Seed of David, and of the Town of Bethlehem. Even the Officers, who were sent to apprehend him, were much affected with his Discourses: They returned without laying Hands on him; and when the Chief Priests and Pharisees asked them why they had not brought him, they answered, Never Man spake like this Man. This very much provoked them; they answered with no small Heat—Are ye also deceived? They told them that none of the Rulers, or Pharisees, who might be supposed the only competent Judges, had believed on him; but only the common People, who were ignorant of the Law, and therefore accursed. Nicodemus, who privately favoured Jesus, thought they were too hasty, and told them that they ought not to condemn any Man unheard. But they were too much enraged to hearken to any Reason: They answered him with Reproaches—Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; <sup>1</sup> for never did any Prophet arise out of Galilee. But their Premises were both false: For Prophets had arisen out of Galilee, particularly Jonah, and probably Nahum, <sup>m</sup> and others;

<sup>1</sup> *αερφίτης εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἐστὶ οὐδέποτε.*

<sup>m</sup> See 1 Kings

xviii. 4.

and our *Lord* himself was not born in *Galilee*. It may possibly seem strange, that our *Lord* did not take Care to obviate such Objections as these ; that he did not satisfy the People with regard to his Descent from *David*, his Birth at *Betblehem*, &c. which being not generally known, even well-meaning Persons might be prejudiced against him. But it must be considered, that this could not well be done, without publickly declaring himself the *Messiah*, which, for Reasons already given, he did not think adviseable to do. \* The very Name of *David*, or of *Betblehem*, out of which the *Jews* expected a *Governor*, that should rule *Israel*, might have alarmed the *Roman Government*, as it formerly did *Herod*. Besides, one would think that these *Rulers*, and *Chief Priests*, if they had searched, and looked, might have found that *Jesus* was both born in *Bethlehem*, and of the *Seed of David*. However, such Evidences of these Matters were (° as we have seen) laid up, as would hereafter, when brought forth, satisfy all impartial Enquirers. In the mean while he might permit such Prejudices to subsist, till the proper Season of clearing up all such Difficulties should arrive. *The Sun of Righteousness*

\* It is observable that our *Lord* never once called himself the *Son of David*, though he approved of the Faith of others who called him so. Matt. ix. 27. xv. 22. xx. 30, 31. xxi. 9.

° See p. 36, &c.

might be content to veil itself under a Cloud, till the World was more able to abide its Heat.

However, as the Time of his Passion now drew near, *Jesus* from henceforth appeared more publickly, and spake of himself more openly, than he had hitherto been wont to do. But yet he did not quite throw off his Reserve. He was still very cautious how he said any thing which might give any Offence to the *Roman* Government, or any just Pretence for his Adversaries to accuse him, as a Mover of Sedition, or an Enemy to *Cæsar*. As therefore the *Jews* were in Expectation of a *Messiah*, who should be their temporal Prince, and as the *Romans* were very jealous of any Pretensions of this Kind, and very watchful over a People so inclinable to Sedition, as the *Jews* were, our *Lord* to the last would not positively declare that he was the *Messiah*. And on the other Hand, the *Chief Priests*, and *Pharisees*, took all Methods to entrap him, and draw from him something, which might afford them just Matter of Accusation. <sup>P</sup> Being disappointed in their Design of seizing him, and perceiving many of the People strongly attached to him, they thought next Day to ensnare him, by bringing before him a *Woman taken in the Act of Adultery*, and asking his Judgement what was to be done with her. Hereby they thought to lay

<sup>P</sup> Joh. viii. 1, &c.

him under no small Difficulty. <sup>9</sup> The Romans had taken away from the Jews all Power of capital Punishment. This the People thought no small Infringement of their Liberties : And often in Cases, which seemed to them notorious, they themselves took upon them to execute Justice on the Offender, without waiting for the Sentence of any Court. Thus they stoned St. Stephen, and thus they attempted to stone our Saviour himself. If our Lord then had given his Opinion that *this Woman* ought to be *stoned*, they would have accused him to the Roman Governor, as a Mover of Sedition, and an Usurper of the Powers which belonged to him alone. On the other Hand, if he had refused to condemn her, or referred them to the Roman Magistrate for Sentence, they thought to exasperate the People against him, and set him forth as one who paid no Regard to Moses, or the Law ; an Encourager of Vice and Immorality, and a Betrayer of the Liberties of his Country. But our Lord, well apprized of their Designs, answered in such a Manner, as was unexceptionable—*He that is without Sin among you, let him first cast a Stone at her.* They, surprised at the Prudence of his Answer, and being convicted by their own Conscience, slipped out, one by one, and left *the Woman* with him : He, seeing all her Accusers withdrawn, and no Man to condemn her, said to her, *Neither do I condemn thee ; go, and Sin*

<sup>9</sup> Joh. xviii. 31.

no more—thus at the same Time declining to pass Sentence upon her, shewing his Disapprobation of her Crime, and exhorting her to Repentance.

\* Our Lord having thus got rid of his Enemies, who sought to ensnare him, continued preaching to the People, as before, and setting forth his divine Mission under such Figures, as they might easily understand, but could not lay hold on. He told them that he was *the Light of the World*, (possibly alluding, and pointing, to the Sun, which then early in the Morning began to shew itself), and that he that followed him, should not walk in Darkness, but should have the *Light of Life*. He plainly designed to allude, and refer, to those Passages of the Prophets, which describe the *Messiah* under the Figure of *the Sun of Righteousness*, *a Light of the Gentiles*, &c. and to signify to them that this *Light was come*, and that *the Day-spring from on high had visited them*. But he had still *Pharisees* about him, who, though they might understand his Meaning, yet were glad to lay hold of any Pretence of cavilling. They remembered perhaps, what he had formerly said, that, "if he bore Witness of himself, his Witness was not true; and they had heard him the Day before declare, that" he sought not his own Glory; and therefore they objected, that he bore Record of

\* Joh. viii. 12, &c. \* Mal. iv. 2. \* If. ix. 2. xlvi. 6.  
xlix. 6. lx. 1. "Joh. v. 31. " Joh. vii. 18.

himself, and consequently his Record was not true. Jesus answered, *Though I bear Record of myself, yet my Record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go.* The Meaning seems to be, that though this Maxim might hold true of mere Man, yet he was more than Man; he came from Heaven, and was shortly going thither again, and therefore had a Right to require Assent to what he delivered in his Father's Name—*But ye cannot tell whence I came, nor whither I go*—Ye are no Judges of my Doctrine, because ye know not my divine Original. And the Reason why ye are thus ignorant is, because ye judge after the Flesh—pass Judgement only according to the outward Appearance, and will not believe me because of the Meanness of my Condition. *I judge no Man, &c.* I am unwilling, I take not upon me, to pass Judgement on you; though, if I did, I should do no more than what I could justify, because my Judgement is confirmed by the Testimony of the Father, that sent me—for *I am not alone, but I, and the Father that sent me.* He then retorts upon them their own Argument, and tells them, that *it was written in their Law, that the Testimony of two Men is true.* It was the Practice of their Courts, authorised by their Law, to allow the Testimony of two sufficient Witnesses. Since therefore he himself declared to them who he was, and the Father confirmed his Testimony, and bore Witness to him by Miracles and mighty Deeds,

it

it followed that his Record was true. Here then we have a full Answer to their Objection: First, he came from Heaven, and therefore he had a Right to be believed on his single Testimony: \* Secondly, his Testimony was not single; but *the Father himself, which sent him, had borne Witness of him.* He here plainly enough points out to them his divine Original; but yet they either could not, or would not understand him. They asked him therefore, *Where is thy Father?* But to this he declined giving any direct Answer, but intimates that it was their own Fault, if they did not know—*Ye neither know me, nor my Father: If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

\* There follows in the Evangelist another Discourse which our Lord made to the Jews in the Temple, in the same Manner and Style as before. He tells them in this Discourse, among other things, that *he was from above;* that *he was not of this World;* and still more plainly—*If ye believe not that I am he—οὐτὶ εἶναι—ye shall die in your Sins.* The Jews asked him—*Who art thou?* He still refuses to give them a positive Answer: *He said unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from*

\* See Joh. v. 32, &c.      \* Joh. viii. 21, &c.      \* *τὴν ἀρχὴν*  
is taken here adverbially (See Gen. xiii. 4. xli. 21. xlvi. 18.  
20. Dan. viii. 1.), and signifies *from the Beginning;* referring  
either to what he had just before said—I am the Light of the  
*World*—or rather to the whole Course of his preaching,  
through

the Beginning. He adds—I have many things to say, and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true, and I speak to the World those things which I have heard of him—I could by many Evidences charge and aggravate your Infidelity; but I shall only say at present that I act, and speak, by Commission from my Father, and therefore it concerns you to attend to what I say. But they, not yet understanding him, he said unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he—*en iyyō*—thereby intimating, that hereafter the Truth should be more plainly revealed. He farther adds, I do nothing of myself, but, as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things: And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him. He speaks here plainly enough to be understood, though not plainly enough for his Enemies to lay hold on. He is here preaching to a captious Audience, and therefore expresses himself with great Caution. He gives them to understand that he is the Messiah, but not in direct and positive Terms—I am from above—I am he—*en iyyō*—the Father hath sent me—he that sent me is true, &c. But when asked—

through which he had, from the very Beginning, given full Proof, and sufficient Manifestation, that he was the Christ. And particularly he had, when convened before them, (See Joh. v. 17, &c.) laid before them full Proof of his Mission.

*Who art thou?* and *Where is thy Father?* he avoided giving them a direct Answer. This Observation will sufficiently account for any Obscurity, which may appear in this, or other such Discourses of our *Saviour*. He would give no Advantage to his captious Enemies; and yet manifested himself sufficiently to all, *who had Ears to hear*. Accordingly we find that, *as he spake these Words, many believed on him*. Several of those *Jews*, who had been questioning with him, thought these Declarations of himself sufficient, and were now ready to acknowledge him for the *Messiah*. But they were not *Disciples indeed*: They knew not what the *Messiah* was; nor were they any Way disposed to practise, or listen to, those Doctrines of Piety and Virtue, which he came into the World to teach Mankind. Such kind of Proselytes *Jesus* never encouraged: He therefore told them, that, if they would be *his Disciples indeed*, they must *continue in his Word*; that thus doing they *should know the Truth, and the Truth should make them free*. This Answer laid open their Heart: They had high Notions of civil Liberty, but none of spiritual, and therefore wondered what he meant by telling them, that *the Truth should make them free*; and replied, that *they were Abraham's Seed, and were never in Bondage to any Man*. A strong Instance this of the Spirit, and Pride, of this People, who were at this very Time *in Bondage to the Romans*.

But

But our Saviour explained himself, and told them, that *whoever committed Sin, was the Servant of Sin.* And, turning his Discourse to the Jews in general, he reproves them with some Severity, charges them with a Design of *killing him*, tells them that their *Works shewed whose Children they were, not of Abraham, but of the Devil, who was from the Beginning a Murderer, and an Enemy to Truth;* that the Reason of their not *believing on him, nor understanding his Speech,* was because they were not of God. At the same Time he declares to them, that *he proceeded forth, and came from God, and that he came not of himself, but God sent him.* The Jews incensed at these just Rebukes, broke out into reproachful Language—*Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil?* He answered them with great Calmness—I have not a Devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. He adds, that *he did not seek his own Glory,* but there was one, who would vindicate his Honour, and punish his Revilers—*there is one that seeketh, and judgeth.* And, as he had said before, that *he that followed him should have the Light of Life,* so here he says—*Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a Man keep my Saying, he shall never see Death.* At this the Jews were still more offended; but he vindicated himself, and told them that, *if he honoured himself, his Honour was nothing, but it was his Father that honoured him.* He proceeds

proceeds to assert his divine Mission in still higher Expressions: He tells them that *Abraham rejoiced to see his Day*, and says in plain Terms—*Before Abraham was, I am.*<sup>2</sup> This strong Assertion of his Divinity served only the more to enrage these Jews: They judged it to be the highest Blasphemy, and accordingly took up Stones to cast at him.

<sup>3</sup> But he escaped from them, and meeting in his Way *a Man who had been blind from his Birth*, he healed him. This Miracle also was wrought on the Sabbath-Day, and occasioned great Disputes among the Pharisees themselves. Some of them argued that *he was not of God, because he kept not the Sabbath Day*; others said, *how can a Man, that is a Sinner, do such Miracles?* They examined into the Fact, with all the Niceness, and Scrupulousness, of Persons unwilling to believe: They questioned both him, and his Parents; they enquired whether this was the same Person, who *sat, and begged*; whether he was really *born blind, how he had received his Sight*: They would not readily believe that *he had been blind, and received his Sight*; but, after receiving sufficient Satisfaction, still put the same Questions over and over again. And when at last, after the strictest Enquiry, the Reality of the Miracle appeared too plain to be denied, they told

<sup>2</sup> See the Author's Vind. of the Doct. of the Trin. Part II. p. 49, &c.      <sup>3</sup> Joh. ix. 1, &c.

the Man, that he must give God the Praise, for they knew that this Man, Jesus, was a Sinner. But the Man boldly disputed the Point with them, and asserted, and plainly proved from this stupendous Miracle, that Jesus was of God; for if he were not of God, he could do nothing. They therefore dismissed him with Reproaches, and cast him out of the Synagogue; for it seems, they were already come to a Resolution, that, if any Man confessed that he was Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue. It appears from hence, that a Persuasion, or Suspicion, that he was the Christ, now prevailed: And our Lord himself declared himself so to be to this Man, who had made such a bold Confession of him. When he next saw him, he said to him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him.

\* Our Lord took Occasion from this Excommunication of the Person he had healed, to discourse to the People under a Parable of a Sheep-fold and Shepherd. God's People are frequently by the Prophets represented under the Figure of Sheep, having God for their Shepherd: And by the same Figure, the Teachers of the People are called their

\* Joh. x. 1, &c.

Shepherds

*Shepherds.* <sup>4</sup> It is also particularly prophesied, that *Shepherds* should arise, who should *feed themselves, and not the Flock*; who should *destroy, and scatter the Sheep of God's Pasture.* <sup>5</sup> And these same Prophecies point out to us one particular *Shepherd*, even *God's Servant David, who should feed his People.* Since therefore these *Pharisees*, who pretended to be Teachers, and *Pastors*, of *God's Flock*, had turned this Man out of their *Sheepfold*, he puts forth this *Parable*, to shew that from henceforth *God's true Sheepfold* should consist of his Disciples; that he was in one Respect *the Door*, by whom only Men have Access to *the Father*, and *enter into his Sheepfold*; and in another *the Shepherd, who leadeth out the Sheep, whose Voice they know, and whom they follow;* that *all that ever came before him, all who had set up for Prophets, and Leaders,* (<sup>f</sup> such as *Theudas, Judas of Galilee, and probably some others*), were *Thieves and Robbers*, who sought their own Profit and Advantage, not the Good of *the Sheep*; that he was *the good Shepherd, the Shepherd foretold by the Prophets, who fed God's People, and so loved his Sheep, as to lay down his Life for their Sake;* that these *Pharisees, these pretended Pastors, were the hireling Shepherds, spoken of by the Prophets, who fed themselves, and not the Flock;* <sup>g</sup> covetous Men, who cared

<sup>d</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 1, &c. Jer. xxiii. 1. <sup>e</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Jer. xxiii. 4, &c. Is. xl. 10. 11. <sup>f</sup> See Acts v. 36. 37. <sup>g</sup> Luk. xvi. 14. Matt. xxiii. 14.

*not for the Sheep*, and would desert them in Time of Danger. And, proceeding in the same figurative Way of Discourse, he foretells his own Death and Resurrection, and the Calling of the Gentiles, a Doctrine, which he had hitherto but sparingly touched upon, but now began more frequently to inculcate—*And other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold, them also I must bring, and they shall bear my Voice, and there shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd.* But the Jews were still divided in their Sentiments concerning him: *Many of them said, He hath a Devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?* Others said that the Doctrines he taught, and the late Miracle he had wrought, were abundantly sufficient to confute such a Calumny—*These are not the Words of him that hath a Devil; can a Devil open the Eyes of the Blind?*

<sup>b</sup> And now the seventy Disciples, whom our Lord had sent before his Face into the Country round about, return from their circuit with great Joy, declaring the Success of their Ministry, and boasting, that even the Devils themselves were subject unto them through the name of Jesus. Our Lord joins in their Joy, assures them of Power over all evil Spirits, and Protection from all Dangers, and thanks God, who had conferred such Power on mean Instruments, and given Knowledge to Persons

<sup>b</sup> Luk. x. 17, &c.

of low Rank and Birth, which was *hid from the wise and prudent* of this World, thereby shewing that such Knowledge was not to be attained by human Wisdom, but was bestowed according to the good Pleasure and Will of God. At the same Time he cautions these Disciples not to be proud of these their Gifts; but to set their Minds on a Good more real, and useful to themselves. *In this,* says he, *rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven.*

These Disciples had, on our Lord's Approach to Jerusalem, been sent to preach the Gospel in the adjacent Regions, *in every City, and Place, whither he himself would come:* And accordingly, when the Festival was over, he himself *went through these Cities and Villages,* teaching, as appears from Luk. xiii. 22. St. Luke has given us some Account of his Transactions, and Doctrine, during this his Progress.

<sup>1</sup> About this Time, a certain Lawyer met him, who having, as I suppose, frequently heard him discourse of eternal Life, came to him, not with a View of Information, *but tempting him,* out of Curiosity, to try what he would say, or perhaps to get out of his Mouth some Matter of Accusation, and asked him—*What shall I do to inherit eternal*

<sup>1</sup> Luk. x. 25, &c.

*Life?* Jesus knew the Man, and his Intentions, and therefore calls not on him to believe on him, but refers him to his own *Law* that he professed. *He said unto him, What is written in the Law? How readest thou?* And he answering, said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thyself.* Jesus approved of his Answer, and told him, that if he really performed these great Commandments, he need not doubt of eternal *Life*. This Lawyer might probably think that he had sufficiently demonstrated his *Love of God* by his religious Observance of the Ceremonies of the Mosaical Law: And, hoping to *justify himself* also in the other Article of *Love to his Neighbour*, he asked Jesus, *who was his Neighbour?* Our *Lord* answered him by a Parable of a *Man*, who fell among *Thieves*, *which stripped and wounded him, and left him half dead:* *A Priest and Levite passed by*, regardless of him; but a good *Samaritan* had *Compassion on him*, and relieved him. Our *Lord* then asked the Lawyer, *which of these three be thought was Neighbour unto him that fell among the Thieves.* And by this Means he extorted from this Man a frank Confession that the *Samaritans*, so hated by the *Jews*, were to be looked upon as *Neighbours*, whenever there should be Occasion, or Room, for any good Offices between them; and taught him, that no Difference

of

Nation, or Religion, ever ought to restrain us from doing Offices of Kindness and Charity to any Man. Thus did our *Lord* in the most artful Manner enforce a Duty, in the Practice of which the *Jews* were so deficient. Thus did he elude the Artifices of his Enemies, and at the same Time confound, and instruct them, taking all Occasions of inculcating the great Doctrines of Morality.

\* No less careful was he to enforce the Duties of Religion. In his Way from *Jerusalem* he passed through *Bethany*, where *Martha*, and her Sister *Mary* received him. While *Martha* was busy in providing for his Entertainment, *Mary sat at his Feet, and heard his Word.* *Martha* was displeased that her Sister had left her to serve alone: But Jesus taught them that to attend on him, and hear his Discourses, was an Employment preferable to the most necessary Businesses of Life—*One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good Part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

The Doctrines he taught in his Circuit through the Cities, and Villages, were the same which he had taught before in *Galilee*. <sup>1</sup> The same Form of Prayer, which he had before taught his Disciples, he now again delivers to them; and in the same Manner teaches them the Necessity and Efficacy

\* Luk. x. 38.      <sup>1</sup> Luk. xi. 1, &c. See Matt. vi. 9, &c.  
vii. 7, &c.

of Prayer. *As he was casting out a Devil, the Pharisees made the same Objection* <sup>m</sup> *they had often done before, ascribing it to the Power of Beelzebub, and calling for a Sign from Heaven.*<sup>n</sup>

\* See Matt. ix. 34. xii. 24, &c. Mar. iii. 22, &c.

<sup>m</sup> This has much perplexed the Harmonists. The Account here of the Cure of this Dæmoniack, and the Discourses consequent thereon, agree so nearly with what we read Matt. xii. 22, &c. that some have supposed it to be the same Action; and as what follows, Luk. xi. 37, and Chap. xii. and xiii. seems closely connected with this, they have supposed all this to have passed at the same Time, soon after our Saviour's second Passover: But, as this is not only a strange Transposition, but we read, Matt. xiii. 1. that the same Day Jesus went out, and sitting by the Sea-side, taught the People in a Variety of Parables, there seems to be no Room for these Transactions. Why then may we not suppose, that these were two different Dæmoniacks, one blind and dumb, dispossessed by our Saviour, not long after his second Passover, as related by St. Matthew; the other dumb, dispossessed by him the next Year, as related here by St. Luke, xi. 14. especially, as these evil Spirits often affected different Persons in like Manner; I would farther suppose that St. Luke, who has omitted the Cure of the first Dæmoniack, and recorded only the last, might think fit to add those Discourses, and Doctrines of our Saviour, which were delivered after the first. This full Answer to the Pharisee's Objection, and strong Proof of his divine Mission, he might think proper to insert, though out of its proper Place. And if this Supposition is allowed, all that is misplaced is from v. 15. to v. 33. the rest follows in its proper Order. The Words οὐ εἰ τῷ λαοῖσι, v. 37, seem indeed to connect what follows with what goes before; but they may relate

• He was now somewhere in his Progress invited to *Dinner* by one of the *Pharisees*, probably with Design to try, whether they might not provoke him to say something, which might afford them Matter of Accusation. The first thing which they took Offence at, was his *not washing before Dinner*: From hence he took Occasion to rebuke the *Pharisees* with great Severity, and exposed their Pride, and Hypocrisy, and Attachment to outward Observances, with great Freedom. So malicious and determinate had their Opposition been to our *Lord*, and his Miracles, as fully justified his treating them now with some Severity; and so great was their Corruption, such false Glosses had they put upon the Law, and so great was their Influence over the People, as made such Severity necessary: Now also, his Time being

relate only to the three preceding Verses; or they may signify—while our *Lord* was holding Discourse with the People on this Occasion.

It is observable that St. *Luke* is the only Evangelist, who has recorded the Mission of the seventy Disciples, their Return to our *Saviour*, and his Transactions during their Progress into *Galilee*, after the Feast of Tabernacles, this Year. He was, I suppose, one of these Seventy, and attended our *Lord* on this Occasion, and was an Eye-Witness to what he relates. St. *Matthew*, and St. *Mark*, having given us an Account of our *Lord's* Miracles, and Doctrine, in his other Circuits through *Galilee*, and studying Brevity, passed over this.

• Luk. xi. 37, &c.

near at Hand, he little cared how he provoked them: And accordingly they were highly incensed, and began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his Mouth, that they might accuse him.

<sup>¶</sup> The People, knowing he was at this *Pharisee's House*, and perhaps hearing he was engaged in Dispute with the *Scribes and Pharisees*, flocked together in great *Multitudes*. Our Lord therefore, as soon as he was got out of the House, took Occasion to discourse to his *Disciples* in the Hearing of the Multitude, and warned them *above all things to beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees, which is Hypocrisy*. He sets the Folly of *Hypocrisy* in a strong Light—*For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known, &c.* He proceeds to give his Apostles the same Instructions, which he had given them when he first sent them out, and exhorts them not to be *afraid, nor ashamed to confess him before Men*. It now appeared that the Powers of the World were combined against him, and his Religion. But his *Friends* might securely trust in *God's Providence*, which took Care of even the smallest Things: They might assure themselves of his Protection, and Assistance here, and of a full Recompence from him hereafter.

<sup>¶</sup> Luk. xii. 1, &c.

Whilst

<sup>¶</sup> Whilst he was discoursing on these divine Matters, *one of the Company*, being more intent upon his temporal, than his eternal Concernments, interrupts him, and desires him to speak to his Brother, that he divide the Inheritance with him. Our Lord disclaims all Authority in such Matters—*Man, who made me a Judge, or a Divider, over you?* And from hence he took Occasion to preach against Covetousness, and to enforce the Doctrine of God's Providence. The Doctrines here delivered are very nearly the same, which he had taught before; but very pertinent to the present Occasion, and follow naturally from the precedent Discourse. The whole Drift of what is here said is, to exhort his Disciples to expect their Reward, not in this World, but in another; not to set their Affections on those things which the Nations of the World seek after, but to seek rather the Kingdom of God; to provide themselves Bags, which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens, that faileth not, &c.

' Having taught his Disciples to look for their Reward in another World, he teaches them what they are to expect in this, not that Peace and Prosperity, which they thought of enjoying in the Times of the *Messiah* — Πάρθενοι οἱ λαοὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ

<sup>¶</sup> Luk. xii. 13, &c.      <sup>¶</sup> Luk. xii. 49, &c.

*τί δέλω; εἰ ἦδη ἀνίφεν—*<sup>\*</sup> This difficult Passage may best be rendered by putting an Interrogation after δέλω, and may be thus interpreted—I am come (not, as you imagine, to bring Peace and Prosperity, but) to send Fire on the Earth, that is, to send Dis-sension, Trouble, and Persecution, as he afterwards explains himself, v. 51.—*Καὶ τί δέλω;*—And what in this Case must I wish for? <sup>†</sup> He speaks as a Person in some Confusion, foreseeing the Events, which were shortly coming, and of which he himself was to bear the greatest Share—*Εἰ ἦδη ἀνίφεν—* Would to God it were already kindled. The Particle εἰ, (as יְהִי in the Hebrew,) not only signifies If, but is also an Optative, and expresses wishing, or desiring: <sup>‡</sup> Thus it is often used in the *Septuagint*, and thus it is used by St. Luke himself, Chap. xix. 42. xxii. 42. And very nearly in this Sense is it rendered by the Vulgate—*Quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* We have in the next Verse the Reason of our Lord's thus expressing himself—But I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished? The Fire, which was to be kindled, was first to take hold of him: He was to be consecrated to his Office by his

\* See Hammond, Knatchbull, Grotii Annot.      † So Joh. xii. 27. Now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say?      ‡ Num. xxii. 29. Jos. vii. 7. Job xvi. 4. Psal. lxxxi. 13.

Death on the Cross. \* This therefore he calls his *Baptism*: This he expected with some kind of Impatience: He was *straitened*; his Human Nature shrunk back at the Prospect of it; or perhaps he was under Straights, found it difficult how to act, and was obliged to be perpetually on his Guard, *till this was accomplished*.

The foregoing Discourse was addressed to his *Disciples*: <sup>y</sup> He now turns to the People, and upbraids them with their Unbelief, *not discerning the Time*, which discovered itself by as manifest Signs, as the Sky, and the Weather did: *And why*, says he, *even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* A plain Way this, though a covert and a guarded one, of intimating who he was, <sup>z</sup> as hath been already observed, <sup>x</sup> He goes on in the same parabolical Way to forewarn them of the Danger of rejecting him. Men, he intimates, in their temporal Affairs, see Danger afar off: If any one has a just Action against them, they make Haste, and give Diligence, to make up the Matter with him betimes, and thus prevent their being sued, and imprisoned. The like Prudence and Diligence he would recommend to Men in their spiritual Concerns, to foresee the evil Times, and, by making their Peace with God, secure themselves from the Wrath to come.

\* See Matt. xx. 22. Mar. x. 38. Luk. xii. 54.  
&c. <sup>y</sup> See p. 161. Some

<sup>a</sup> Some who were present told him of certain *Galileans*, whom *Pilate* set upon as they were sacrificing, and mingled their *Blood* with the *Blood* of the Beasts they were offering. Our *Saviour*, according to his Custom of raising moral Reflections from all Occurrences, takes Occasion from hence both to correct the Pride, and Uncharitableness of those, who were apt to conclude those the greatest Sinners, who lay under the greatest Calamities, and also to exhort all Men to secure themselves from *God's Vengeance* by a speedy Repentance. *Suppose ye*, says he, *that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?* I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in *Jerusalem*? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. <sup>b</sup> The Words seem prophetical, and seem to point particularly at the Calamities, which afterwards befell the *Jews*—*ωντας—ιπέσιοντες*. In the Destruction of *Jerusalem* the seditious *Jews* were like these *Galileans*, slaughtered on the Day of the Passover, in the Temple, amidst their Sacrifices; and many of them, like those on whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell, were buried in the Ruins of the City.

<sup>a</sup> Luk. xiii. 1, &c.<sup>b</sup> See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.*

\* To the same Purpose tends the *Parable of the Fig-Tree*, being designed to foretell the Rejection of the *Jews*, and to instruct those, who had *Ears to hear*, that *God was now laying the Ax to the Root of the Tree*; that he had given them Space to repent; but that if they did not make Use of it, they had nothing to expect but Destruction and Excision.

\* Another Miracle about this Time *Jesus* wrought on the *Sabbath-Day*, openly in the *Synagogue*, healing a *Woman* of an *Infirmity*, which had bowed her together for eighteen Years, so that she could in no wise lift up herself. And when the *Ruler of the Synagogue* took Offence at what he thought a Breach of the *Sabbath*, our *Lord* shewed from their own Principles and Practices, the Reasonableness of what he had done, in such a Manner as silenced and confounded his *Adversaries*: And all the People rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. He seems to have chosen this Time of working his Miracles, in Order, if possible, to correct the superstitious Notions of the *Jews*: He desired only such Profelytes, as were Persons of real Piety and Virtue, and rather chose to discourage, and offend the Generality of the *Jews*, who placed the chief Part of their Religion in outward Observances.

\* Luk. xiii. 6, &c.

\* Luk. xiii. 10, &c.

*e* Jesus, having now taught in the Cities and Villages of Judæa, returned again to Jerusalem in the Winter. There we find him in the Temple at the Feast of the Dedication, <sup>‘</sup> a Festival of eight Days, instituted by Judas Maccabæus, in Memory of the Temple being cleansed, and sanctified, after it had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes. The Jews, seeing him here, came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. It appears from hence, that an Opinion then strongly prevailed, that Jesus was the Christ, and that he himself was supposed to have declared as much, though not with sufficient Plainness. This Reservedness seems to have given no small Offence to the Jews, and to have been made no small Objection against our Lord: And therefore these Jews came about him, demanding a more express Declaration who he was: Some of them, probably sincerely, desirous of farther Satisfaction; but many of them (as appears by the Sequel), out of Contention, and in Pretence, seeking only Matter of Accusation against him. Jesus perceiving their Hypocrisy, and knowing the Consequences of such a Declaration, as they desired, would not give them a direct Answer; but yet he gave them such a one, as amounted to a suffi-

• Luk. xiii. 22.      Joh. x. 22, &c.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Macc. iv. 59.

cient Declaration of himself. <sup>¶</sup> As before to a like Question he answered—*Even the same that I said unto you from the Beginning*—so to these Jews he replies—*I told you, and ye believed not; the Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me.* i. e. I have already told you plainly enough, but to no Purpose; The Miracles, which I do in my Father's Name, sufficiently declare who I am—*But ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep,* &c. The Reason why you do not believe me is, because you are not properly disposed to believe the Truth: Persons of unprejudiced Minds, and teachable Dispositions, may easily perceive who I am. He goes on to call God his *Father*; and tells them, that *he and his Father are one.* But these Jews, instead of being satisfied with so full a Declaration of himself, were so provoked, that they *took up Stones to stone him.* And now we may perceive what Sort of Jews these were, and what Use they would probably have made of it, had our *Lord* given them a more direct Answer to their Question. Jesus answered them, *Many good Works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those Works do you stone me?* They replied, that it was *for Blasphemy; and because he, being a Man, made himself God.* To this our *Lord* gives a very artful Answer: He tells them, that those who acted by Commission from God, were in *Scripture* called

<sup>¶</sup> Joh. viii. 25. See p. 202.

*Gods;*

Gods; and therefore he, who was sent by God, might, without *Blasphemy*, call himself *the Son of God*. But this Answer, though designed to evade the Malice of the *Jews*, is yet so expressed, as to intimate both his *Messiahship*, and his Superiority to all others, who were called *Gods* - If he called them *Gods*, unto whom the *Word of God came*, say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the *World*, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the *Son of God*? As much as to say—If they are called *Gods*, I am so in a higher Manner, who am so peculiarly sanctified by *God*, and sent into the *World*. He appeals again to his *Works*, and from thence proves to them, that the *Father is in him, and he in him*. The *Jews* still continued highly offended at him, and sought again to take him; but he found Means to escape from them, and went away again beyond *Jordan*, to the Place where *John* at first baptized. Here many resorted unto him; and, being prepared by *John's* Preaching, believed on him.

\* It might be possibly one of these Believers, who asked our *Lord* the Question, whether there were few that be saved. The *Jews* expected a temporal Deliverer, who should restore the whole Nation, and give them Peace and Prosperity. This Man observing that *Jesus* was not received by the whole Nation, but only by a few, was probably thereby

\* Luk. xiii. 23, &c.

moved to put this Question to him : But, this being a Question of more Curiosity than Use, our *Lord*, instead of giving a direct and positive Answer to it, takes Occasion from hence to give good Advice to his Hearers. He addressed himself, not to the impertinent Querist, but to all his Hearers, and said unto them, *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, &c. The Purport of his Doctrine is plainly this : Be not so curious to enquire into the Number of those who shall embrace my Doctrine, and be saved ; but rather take Care that you yourselves be found in that Number : *The Gate is straight* ; and the Profession of my Religion in these Times, is attended with no small Difficulty, and must expose Men to many Temptations ; and many, who undertake it, will miscarry for Want of sufficient Care and Resolution. He goes on to reprove the Presumption of those *Jews*, who fancied themselves alone the Favourites of Heaven. He gives them to understand, that if they did not embrace the present Opportunity of Salvation, the Time would come, when they should seek for Mercy, but it would be too late. It would be to no Purpose to plead their Relation to him, or Acquaintance with him ; he should never own those who were *Workers of Iniquity*. It was in vain to boast of their Fathers, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Prophets* ; it would only add to their Misery, to

see

see these their Ancestors in the Kingdom of God, whilst they, their degenerate Sons, notwithstanding the Relation which they bore to them, should be for ever excluded. He adds, that *they should come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and should sit down in the Kingdom of God.* He here plainly foretells the Rejection of the Jews, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*; Doctrines, which he had hitherto generally delivered in Parables, and Figures,<sup>1</sup> though sometimes indeed delivered with more Freedom. These Words also contain a satisfactory Answer to the Doubt proposed. If few in Proportion among the Jews should believe on him, this they need not be surprised at, for many should come from all Parts, and should embrace the Doctrine, and Salvation, which he came to offer to the World.

\* *The same Day came certain of the Pharisees, and advised him to depart out of these Coasts, because Herod,*<sup>1</sup> who was *Tetrarch of Galilee*, had Deligns against his Life. \*<sup>m</sup> *These Pharisees were probably employed by Herod himself,*<sup>n</sup> who was greatly perplexed at the Fame of Jesus, and sought by this Means to terrify him, and drive him out of his

<sup>i</sup> See Matt. viii. 11, &c. See also p. 110, 111. \* Luk. xiii. 31, &c. <sup>1</sup> Luk. iii. 1. xxiii. 6, 7. \*<sup>m</sup> See *Crotii* Annot. <sup>n</sup> See Matt. xiv. 1, &c. Luk. ix. 7.

Province. Jesus seeing through their, and his Artifices, bade them tell that Fox, that he stood in no Fear of him, that he should go on performing Miracles, as long as he thought fit, and that no one could hurt him till the Time appointed ; that then he should go to *Jerusalem*; this was the Place noted for the Murder of the Prophets ; and here he intimates that he himself should suffer, and therefore had no Reason to fear the Displeasure of the Tetrarch of *Galilee*. And from hence he again takes Occasion to foretell the Rejection of the Jews, and Destruction of *Jerusalem*: He had now several Times attempted to preach the Gospel at *Jerusalem*, and had always been ill received : He had lately been in Danger of being stoned there, and been forced to fly from the Rage of the Populace : He therefore pronounces *Desolation*, and Destruction on that rebellious City, and tells them, that they should see him no more, till they were ready to welcome him in a better Manner, and should say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord*. These last Words seem to refer to that triumphant Entry, which he not long after made into *Jerusalem*.

Our Lord continued in *Galilee* working Miracles, and preaching to the same Purport, as he had done before. ° *He healed a Man, which had the*

° Luk. xiv. 1, &c.

*Drop*, on the Sabbath-Day, and justified the Practice by the same good Reasons, <sup>p</sup> as he had on like Occasions used before. And this he did with such Effect, as to stop the Mouths of the Pharisees, who were on the Watch to lay hold on any thing he said, or did.

This Miracle was wrought in *the House of one of the chief Pharisees*, where he was invited to a Feast. And here, as usual, he took Occasion to draw moral Observations from what passed. <sup>q</sup> Observing the Ceremonies of placing the Guests, it not being, I suppose, usual for Persons to thrust themselves into the highest Places, till called up, and placed there by the Master of the Feast, he from hence enforces the Necessity, and Advantages, of Humility. And taking Notice that such Entertainments were usually made by the Rich for the Rich, who were able to return the Favour again; he tells them that there was no Virtue in such Sort of Liberality; that they should rather employ their Charity in feeding *the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, and the Blind*, who could not recompense them again: And then they might expect their *Recompence at the Resurrection of the Just*. Thus did our Lord take all Occasions of calling off Men's Thoughts from this World, and setting them on that which is to come.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xii. 10. &c. Luk. xiii. 15, &c. <sup>q</sup> Luk. xiv. 7, &c.

Upon

Upon this one of the Guests said—*Blessed is he that shall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God.* Whether he spoke figuratively of the Future State of the Blessed in Heaven, or, in a more gross Sense, of the temporal Kingdom of the *Messiah* here, we need not enquire. Our *Lord* answered him by a Parable applicable to both, and well adapted to the present Occasion, of a Man, who made a great Supper, and bade many, &c. This Parable gave them to understand that *the Kingdom of God* was already come unto them, and that they were all invited to partake of it, but that they would not accept of the Invitation; that especially, the great, and the rich, refused to come in, and none but the poorest, and the meanest, of the *Jews*, were obedient to the Call; and that, on their Refusal, Foreigners, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promise, would be called in to supply their Rooms.

As he went from hence, *great Multitudes* followed him. But he, instead of giving them any Encouragement, spoke to them in such a Manner, as must necessarily discourage, and alienate their Affections from him. He told them that they, who would be *his Disciples*, must be prepared to part with their nearest and dearest Relations, yea, and their own *Life* also; must forsake all that they had, and bear their *Cross*, and come after him. He

<sup>1</sup> Luk. xiv. 15, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Luk. xiv. 25, &c.

signified to them, that it was to no Purpose to take up the Profession of his Religion hastily, or unadvisedly ; that they must first consider what it would cost them ; examine themselves, whether they were prepared to encounter Temptation, and Persecution, and part with all that was dear to them for the sake of their Profession. These must be most strange and uncomfortable Doctrines to a People gaping after temporal Grandeur, and expecting to find in our *Lord a Messiah*, who would lead them on to Triumphs, Riches, and Honours. But *Jesus sought not his own Glory, or Interest* : He delighted not (as Impostors usually do) in a promiscuous Crowd of hasty Followers : His sole Aim was to invite Men to the Practice of Virtue and Piety ; and therefore he desired no Disciples, but such as were ready to embrace, and practise his Doctrines ; all other Followers he constantly discouraged.

<sup>1</sup> The *Pharisees* observed that the *Publicans and Sinners* often resorted to our *Lord*, and that he gave them Encouragement. This they made a Matter of Accusation against him : They murmured, saying, *This Man receiveth Sinners, and eateth with them.* To this Charge our *Saviour* returned an Answer by two or three *Parables*, which in the most familiar, and striking, and at the same Time most inoffensive, Manner, corrected their Pride, and Want of

<sup>1</sup> Luk. xv. 1, &c.

Charity, shewed the Reasonableness of encouraging repenting Sinners, and the good Grounds there were to hope, that such would meet with a gracious Reception from their heavenly Father. These Parables also, and particularly that beautiful one of the *Prodigal Son*, carry with them a farther Meaning, and plainly point out the Calling of the *Gentiles*.

" *Jesus* then turned to *his Disciples*, and taught them also by Parables, but such as had a particular View to the Vices of the *Pharisees*. By the Parable of the *Unjust Steward*, he designed to teach them the Necessity of Charity and Alms-giving, and the Contempt of Riches, to admonish them to set their Affections on things above, and to forecast, and provide in this World, for their Welfare in the next. But such Kind of Doctrine was no way suitable to the Taste of the *Pharisees*. They, *who were covetous*, heard all these things, and understood him but too well; but, instead of reforming their Manners, derided, and had in Contempt this their faithful Monitor. But *Jesus* severely rebuked them—*Ye are they*, said he, *which justify yourselves before Men*; but *God knoweth your Hearts*; *for that, which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is Abomination in the Sight of God*. He adds—*The Law and the Prophets were until John*; since that Time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every Man

\* Luk. xvi. 1, &c.

preffeth into it. These Words seem to import that now under the Gospel a more strict Holiness, and Purity of Life, was required, than there was under the Law; that however under the former Dispensation they might value themselves upon their outward Observances, such Sort of Righteousness would little avail them under the Gospel. \* A new Dispensation was now to take Place, and not only thofe, who thought themselves the only Favourites of Heaven, but all Mankind, even the Publicans, and Sinners, and the Gentiles also, who, as they thought, had no Right, or Title, to the Inheritance, would, as it were by Force, seize on it. Here is at the same Time a plain Intimation that he was the *Mefſiaſ*—Since the Time of John, he tells them, *the Kingdom of God is preached*. It follows—Ἐυαγγέλιον δέ—But it is easier for Heaven and Earth to pass, than one Tittle of the Law to fail. Though *the Kingdom of God is preached*, yet *the Law* is not thereby abrogated, or any Part of it set aside, but, on the contrary, completed and perfected. \* An eminent Instance of this I have formerly given you in the Case of *Divorces*, which are now declared unlawful, according to the original Institution of Matrimony. Then, returning to the Argument he was upon before, our *Lord* gives them the Parable of *Dives* and

\* See Matt. xi. 12. p. 115, 116.    \* See Matt. v. 27, &c. xix. 3. &c.

*Lazarus*, which sets forth in still plainer Terms, the Necessity of Alms-giving, the Vanity of Riches, the Folly of Covetousness, and the Certainty of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments after this Life. In the Close of it, he seems to refer to what was soon after really the Case in Fact. These *Pharisees*, who would not believe the Testimony, which *Moses and the Prophets* bare to him, *neither would they be persuaded*, though he afterwards confirmed his Doctrine by his own *Resurrection from the Dead*.

<sup>y</sup> Our *Lord* then turns his Discourse to his *Disciples*, and instructs them in the Duties of Compassion and Condescension to our weak Brethren, Charity, and Forgiveness of Injuries.

<sup>z</sup> *And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our Faith.* <sup>a</sup> He had not long ago empowered them to work Miracles in his Name; <sup>b</sup> and he had taught them that their Want of Power to do the Works, which he did, was owing to their Want of *Faith*: They therefore being, as I suppose, pleased with the Exercise of such a Power, begged of our *Lord to increase their Faith*. He again intimates to them, that it was their own Fault, if they wanted such Power: *If they had Faith as a Grain of Mustard-Seed*, the greatest Miracles would not be difficult to

<sup>y</sup> Luk. xvii. 1, &c.      <sup>z</sup> Luk. xvii. 5, &c.      <sup>a</sup> Luk. x. 9.  
17.      <sup>b</sup> Matt. xvii. 20.

them. At the same Time he admonishes them not to be proud of these their Gifts, or any of their Performances. They should remember they were only the *Servants of God*; if they did the utmost they could for his Service and Honour, it was no more than their bounden *Duty*, what was *commanded them*, and therefore no *Thanks* were due to them, nor could they have any *Reason*, or *Pretence*, to glory, or to value themselves on their Performances. They were *unprofitable Servants*, and had given nothing to *God*, but that to which he had a just Right and *Claim*.

<sup>c</sup> *Jesus had been now some Time in Galilee.* <sup>d</sup> He now sets out on his Return toward *Jerusalem*, and passes—*διὰ μέσου Σαμαρείας ἢ Γαλιλαίας*—in the Mid-way along the Confines of *Samaria* and *Galilee*. *And, as he entered into a certain Village, there met him ten Men that were Lepers.* <sup>e</sup> These, being by the Law *unclean*, and debarred the Society of other Men, *stood afar off*, and at a Distance implored his *Mercy*. He bade them go *shew themselves unto the Priests*. *And, as they went, they were cleansed.* One of them only, who was a *Samaritan*, returned to *Jesus*, to acknowledge, and thank him for the *Mercy*, which he had received. Our *Lord* took Occasion from thence to observe, that out of the *Ten* none re-

<sup>c</sup> See p. 224.  
<sup>xiii. 46.</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Luk. xvii. 11, &c.

<sup>e</sup> See Lev.

turned to give Glory to God, save this Stranger; thereby designing to intimate that Strangers, even the Samaritans themselves, would partake of the Benefits of his Gospel, and that they would receive it with more *Faith*, and Thankfulness, than the Jews themselves.

<sup>f</sup> About this Time he was asked by some of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come. They seem to have asked with the same Design, as the Jews did at Jerusalem, who demanded of him—  
<sup>g</sup> If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly; and their Meaning was—If you really are the Christ, as you seem willing to be thought, when are you to take Possession of your Kingdom? Why is the Time so long delayed? Our Lord's Answer is very remarkable—The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: i. e. You are quite mistaken in your Notions of the Messiah, and his Kingdom: The Kingdom of God cometh not (as you imagine) μετὰ παραπλήσιων—with outward Pomp and Splendor; nor is the Messiah to be ushered in by a Concourse of People, pointing at him, or proclaiming his Name: He comes in a more silent, and private Manner—ἰδίᾳ γάρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐστιν—The Kingdom of God is already come, and subsists amongst you. This was a plain, and proper Answer, to their Question; but yet,

<sup>f</sup> Luk. xvii. 20, &c.    <sup>g</sup> Joh. x. 34.

as he named not himself, and as he disclaimed all kingly Pomp and Splendor, they could not lay hold on it.

<sup>b</sup> He then turns to his *Disciples*, who were doubtless also desirous to *know when the Kingdom of God should come*. He gives them to understand, that the Time of his coming in Glory, was not to be immediately. *The Days would come when they should desire to see one of the Days of the Son of Man*, when they should wish for his Presence among them, *and should not see it*; that his Coming should be sudden and unexpected, and his *Day a Day of Vengeance*, and swift Destruction, to those who least expected it, *as in the Days of Noah, and those of Lot*; but that he was *first to suffer many things, and be rejected of this Generation*. Such Doctrines, though necessary to check the Impatience of these *Disciples*, must yet appear at that Time very strange and unintelligible to them, and to the other *Jews*. Accordingly some of them, amazed at such strange Predictions of Desolation, asked him where these things were to happen. He answered by a proverbial Expression—*Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together*—which, as it foretells the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*, so it signifies that the Destruction should be general. As *Eagles*, and other Birds of Prey, find

<sup>b</sup> Luk. xvii. 22, &c.

out a *Carcase*, wherever it is, so should the *Roman Armies* find out the *Jews*, and make Slaughter of them in every Place.

As he had taught them that they were not to expect an immediate Appearance of his *Kingdom*, but that Times of Suffering and Tribulation were first to come, so, to comfort and alleviate their Impatience, <sup>i</sup> he gives a *Parable* of an *unjust Judge*, who, though at first he refused to hear the Petition of a poor *Widow*, yet was at last, by her continual Importunity, prevailed upon to grant her Request. The Argument runs thus—If evil Men are often prevailed on, by continual and importunate Request, to do Acts of Mercy and Justice, how much more will the just and good *God* be ready to hear the continued Prayers of his faithful Servants? And the Parable was designed to teach Men not to be impatient, if *God* delayed his Coming; that their Prayers would, sooner or later, be most assuredly heard, and that the Time of the *Messiah's* coming to judge his Enemies, and reward his faithful Followers, though not immediate, was certain; and therefore that they ought patiently to wait for it with *Prayer*, and *Faith* in *God*. But such *Faith*, he tells them, would very rarely be found at the Time of his Appearance.

<sup>i</sup> Luk. xviii. 1, &c.

This

\* This Mention of Prayer gave our Lord Occasion to add another Parable of a Pharisee and Publican, who went up into the Temple to pray. This Parable was aimed at the Pharisees, his invidious Examiners; and was designed to rebuke their Pride and Self-sufficiency; to shew them that Humility and Contrition were necessary Conditions of Prayer; that he that exalted himself should be abased, and that he that humbled himself should be exalted.

St. Matthew, and St. Mark, have given us no Account of our Saviour's Transactions from the Time that he left Galilee, and went up to Jerusalem, to the Feast of Tabernacles, which Omission has been hitherto supplied by St. Luke, and St. John.  
<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew tells us, that when Jesus had finished these Sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the Coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, or, as St. Mark expresses it, by the farther Side of Jordan—*ἀπὸ τῆς Ιορδανῆς*. He left Galilee immediately after he had finished the Sayings there referred to. But he did not immediately go into the Coasts beyond Jordan. This must be referred to a subsequent Journey, after he had been again in Galilee. As therefore we read Matt. xix. 13, that little Children were then brought unto him, and as we meet with the same and the following Stories, Luk. xviii. 15, &c. it is

<sup>k</sup> Luk. xviii. 9, &c.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. xix. 1, 2. Mar. x. 1.

reasonable to suppose, that this Journey of our *Lord* across *Jordan*, happened at the same Time in which these things are said to have been transacted by St. *Luke*. Since then we find in <sup>m</sup> St. *Luke*, that our *Saviour* was now going to *Jerusalem through the midst*, or along the Confines of *Samaria and Galilee*, we may suppose, that instead of taking the direct Road to *Jerusalem*, he crossed over *Jordan*. And here also great Multitudes followed him; and he taught them after his usual Manner, and healed those who wanted his Assistance.

<sup>n</sup> Here came some of the *Pharisees* to him, who, with Design to tempt, or ensnare him, asked him, whether it were lawful for a Man to put away his *Wife* for every Cause. They understood, I suppose, that <sup>o</sup> he taught the Unlawfulness of all Divorces; <sup>p</sup> he had indeed very lately delivered this Doctrine. They hoped therefore, by putting this Question to him, to draw something from him, which might offend, and alienate the People from him, and give them Ground to accuse him, as contradicting the Law of *Moses*. He, not afraid of offending them, or any one, when the Cause of Truth was concerned, boldly affirmed the Unlawfulness of Divorces, and referred them for Proof to the Writings of *Moses* himself, <sup>q</sup> where we find it declared

<sup>m</sup> Luk. xvii. 11.      <sup>n</sup> Matt. xix. 3, &c.    Mar. x. 2, &c.

\* Matt. v. 32.      <sup>p</sup> Luk. xvi. 18.      <sup>q</sup> Gen. ii. 24.

in the Beginning of the Creation, in the first Institution of Marriage, that *a Man should leave his Father and Mother, and should cleave to his Wife*; and they twain should be one Flesh. From whence he argues with irresistible Force of Reason, that, *what God had joined together, no Man should put asunder*. Against this the Pharisees urged the Law of Moses, which allowed a Man to give his Wife a Bill of

\* Deut. xxiv. 1. The Meaning of this Law has been very much questioned. A Man is here allowed to put away his Wife, if she find no Favour in his Eyes, because he hath found some Uncleanliness in her—in the Original—**כִּי נָצָא בָּהּ עֲרֹתָה דְּבָר**—The Sense of these last Words has been much disputed. The least that can, I think, be said is, that the Practice and Casuistry of the Generality of the Jews was much more loose than was intended by the Law. A Man is not hereby allowed to put away his Wife for every Cause, but only for some Uncleanness—**עֲרֹתָה דְּבָר**—which signifies either Incontinence, or at least some foul Practice, or just Cause of Suspicion. But herein every Man was allowed to be his own Judge. The Law, considered as a Civil Law, permitted any Man to put away his Wife without Complaint made to any Magistrate, provided he gave her a Bill of Divorcement. But this was permitted only, and permitted because of the Hardness of their Hearts, to prevent the ill Effects, which might otherwise have happened among such a People, from Jealousy, Cruelty, &c. And this Provision was made for the Relief of the Woman, to prevent hasty Divorces, and to give the Woman the same Liberty, which the Man had, of marrying another. See Hammond on Divorces. Lightfoot Hor. Heb. Blackall, Serm. 30.

*Divorcement, and put her away.* Our Lord answered, that *Moses suffered this, because of the Hardness of their Hearts, but that from the Beginning it was not so.* This Artifice of the *Pharisees* had in some Measure its Effect: *His Disciples* were surprized at this Doctrine, and argued that, *if the Case of a Man were so with his Wife, it was good not to marry.* Our *Saviour*, in his Answer, seems to allow this Inference, that those, who were able to contain, had, at least in those Times, better refrain from Marriage; but that all had not this Gift; that such might marry, but ought to keep to one Wife, and never on any Pretence divorce her.

*' Here also some Persons brought unto him little Children, with Design that he should lay his Hands on them, and bless them.* *His Disciples*, thinking it unfit that their Master should be troubled and interrupted by these Children, rebuked those that brought them. But Jesus was much displeased. He called them unto him, took them up in his Arms, put his Hands upon them, and blessed them. And from hence he took Occasion to instruct his Disciples, both that *little Children — παιδία — βρέφη —* were proper Subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven; <sup>1</sup> and that no others were capable of being admitted into this

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xix. 13, &c. Mar. x. 13, &c. Luk. xviii. 15, &c. <sup>1</sup> See Matt. xviii. 1, &c.

Kingdom, but those, who became as little Children, and were, like them, innocent, humble, and teachable.

• While Jesus was in these Parts, *a young Man, a Ruler, came running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what good Thing shall I do, that I may have eternal Life?* We have here again a most remarkable Instance, how little Encouragement our *Lord* gave to any Followers, who were not thoroughly prepared to obey the Rules of Virtue and Piety. This Person was *young, and rich, of Rule and Authority in his Country, and, as to his outward Behaviour, of unblameable Character.* Had *Jesus* been an Enthusiast, he could not well have failed of applauding, and encouraging, this Person's Zeal. The Accession of Persons of Figure, and Character, strengthens the Claim of an Enthusiast, and adds Oil to his Flame. On the other Hand, had *Jesus* been an Impostor, he would doubtless gladly have embraced so considerable a Profelyte: He could not have chosen a fitter Person to serve his Purpose. It may indeed seem that this young Gentleman was such a Disciple, as a Teacher really sent from *God* would willingly have retained. The Style, in which he addresses our *Lord*, should seem to be no improper one—*Good Master.* It is no

<sup>u</sup> Matt. xix. 16, &c. Mar. x. 17, &c. Luk. xviii. 18, &c.

uncommon Appellation among Men one to another, and our *Lord* had received, if not the same, yet as high Titles, from others, without being offended: And the Question put to him was doubtless a very proper and important one—*What shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* And yet our *Lord* seems to answer with some degree of Dislike: *Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God; if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* Our *Lord* had doubtless his Reasons for receiving this Person so coldly: *He knew what was in Man;* he saw Defects in him, which would have escaped a common Observation. The Case seems to have been this: This young *Man*, as he was *rich*, so he was very covetous, and *trusted in his Riches*: He seems also to have valued himself upon his punctual observance of the Law, and to have had great Notions of attaining *eternal Life* by his own Righteousness, and that possibly by the observance of some particular Precept above the rest: He had heard of our *Saviour's* Fame, and thought him to be a Teacher sent from *God*; and therefore came to him to be resolved, what Precept was most necessary to be observed in order to entitle a *Man* to *eternal Life*—τί ἀγαδόν ποιῶ—*What good Thing shall I do?* \* Our *Lord* very artfully (under his own Person, and seeming to speak

\* See *Grotii* Annot.

of himself) rebukes this Man's confidence in his own Performances—*there is no Man good but one, that is God.* *No Man* (and possibly this Person took Jesus for no more than Man) has any Right to boast in his Goodness, none is sufficiently, and perfectly *good*, but *God* alone. And at the same Time he sets before him the Conditions on which he might obtain *eternal Life*, by *keeping*, not one, but all, the *Commandments*. *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*—not any ritual Observances, but the Precepts of the Moral Law—*Do not commit Adultery, Do not Kill, &c.* The young Man answered that he had observed all these from his Youth. Jesus, who knew there was some Truth in what he said, could not but behold him with some Degree of Affection, and Pity; considering that a Person of such Zeal, and good Dispositions, so nigh the Kingdom of Heaven, should yet fall short of it. But, as he knew him to be unfit for his Disciple, he gave him a Precept, which should put him to the Trial. *He said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven, and come and follow me.* But this was too hard a Lesson for him: Notwithstanding his Boasts of his own Righteousness, and his seeming Readiness to comply with whatever our Lord should prescribe to him, he did not care to part with his Riches for a *Treasure in Heaven.* And he went away

away sorrowful ; for he had great Possessions. From hence our *Lord* took Occasion to observe, how inconsistent Riches usually were with the Profession of his Gospel, and how difficult it was for *Rich Men* to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This to his *Disciples*, who still were in Expectation of temporal Grandeur and Prosperity, seemed very strange Doctrine : They were astonished out of Measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved ? He therefore explained himself, and qualified the seeming Harshness of his Doctrine, telling them that what he spoke was meant of those, who trusted in Riches ; and that what, humanly speaking, was impossible, was yet, by the Power and Grace of God, possible.

\* Peter having heard our *Lord* bid the young Man sell whatsoever he had, and give to the Poor, thought proper to put him in Mind, that they had already left all, and followed him, and desired to know what Reward they were therefore to have. He might have answered himself in our Saviour's Words—a Treasure in Heaven. But their Minds were bent on earthly things. They had now for a long Time followed our *Lord*, and saw hitherto but little Prospect of any Recompence : They began therefore to be uneasy, and impatient to know what Reward they were to expect—What shall we have therefore ? Jesus, not willing to dis-

\* Matt. xix. 27, &c. Mar. x. 28, &c. Luk. xviii. 28, &c.

courage them, answered them according to their own Way of thinking, and told them that, *in the Regeneration*<sup>1</sup>, that is, in the new State of things, which was to commence under his Government, *when the Son of Man should sit on the Throne of his Glory, they also should sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel*, that is, they should be appointed Officers, and bear Rule and Authority under him, as the Chiefs of the Tribes did among the Jews. And he farther assured them, that whosoever should part with temporal good things *for his Name's sake* should be abundantly rewarded, and *should receive an hundred<sup>2</sup> fold in this present Time, and in the World to come eternal Life*. Our Lord who generally used to check his Disciples, and discourage all Notions of temporal Grandeur, seems here for once to depart from his usual Method, and to humour them (if I may so speak) in their gross Conceptions. They were very much offended at his foregoing Discourse : We read that *they were exceedingly amazed, and astonished out of Measure*, when they were told that *Riches disqualify Men from entering into the Kingdom of God*. Jesus there-

<sup>1</sup> See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.*

<sup>2</sup> This was supposed to be the greatest Increase of Corn in the most plentiful Seasons, and most fruitful Soil, (Comp. Gen. xxvi. 12. Matt. xiii. 8.) and signifies an abundant Recompence. *Hammond Annot.*

fore, unwilling to break the bruised Reed, or quench the smoaking Flax, accommodates himself in some Measure to their InfirmitieS, and expresses himself in such a manner, as might seem to promise them temporal Rule, and Felicity. But, as he soon afterwards more fully explained his Meaning to them, so his Words carried with them sufficient Intimation what Kind of Felicity they were to expect. They were to sit on Thrones, but it was—*ἐν παντού*—in a new State of things—they were to receive an hundred fold in this present Time—but the very Particulars enumerated shew it was not to be in Kind: And our Lord adds, that it was to be with Persecutions; and at the same Time points out to them what they ought chiefly to have in View—eternal Life in the World to come. If it be asked, how this Promise was fulfilled, it may be answered, that the Apostles did really bear Rule in this World, though not such a Kind of Rule as they expected, but a spiritual Rule in the Church of Christ; and that what they did and suffered for the Sake of their Master, was abundantly recompenced even in this Life, by the Gifts, and Graces, and Comforts of the Spirit. And, in the World to come, when the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory, they shall be advanced to more eminent Posts, and higher Degrees of Glory. As to other Christians, \* it is certain, that Godliness has the Promise of the Life

\* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

that now is, as well as of that which is to come. All they who part with the good things of this Life for Christ's Sake, and his Gospel's, shall in this present Time be sure of God's Grace and Protection, Peace and Comfort of Mind, and such a Share of the good things of this Life, as God sees to be necessary, or expedient for them, and in the World to come Life everlasting.

<sup>b</sup> Yet farther to correct the Pride and Ambition of his Apostles, our Saviour adds, that *many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.* This, as I suppose, was a proverbial Saying, and was here designed by our Lord as a Caution to them, not to value themselves too much on their Zeal in his Service. They might think that they had done a great deal for his Sake, but, if they did not shew the same Diligence unto the End, others, who came later into his Service, might outstrip them, and obtain a greater Reward. To the same Purpose also he delivered a Parable of *an Householder, who hired Labourers to work in his Vineyard.* This Parable, as it was designed to keep his Disciples from any Conceit of Merit in the Services they had done for him, so had it a farther Respect to the whole Jewish Nation; and was intended to teach them not to value themselves too highly on being God's chosen People,

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xix. 30.

<sup>c</sup> See Luk. xiii. 28, &c.

and

and to shew them, that others would be called as well as they, who, though called later, might yet equal them in Merit, and obtain the same Reward.

<sup>a</sup> Whilst Jesus was in the Region beyond Jordan, News was brought him that his Friend and Acquaintance Lazarus of Bethany was sick. He at first seemed to make light of it, and said, *This Sickness is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God.* Accordingly, he still continued two Days in the same Place where he was. After this he proposed to his Disciples to go again into Judea. They being full of Fear, both for their Master, and themselves, endeavoured to dissuade him from going thither, putting him in Mind of the Danger he so lately escaped there of being stoned by the Jews. He answered, that there were twelve Hours in the Day; and that, if any man walk in the Day, he stumbleth not. By the Day he means the Time allotted him for his Ministry; during which Time he was secure, as being under God's Protection; full as secure in the last Hour of this Day, as in the first—But if a man walk in the Night he stumbleth, &c.—They only had Reason to be afraid of Danger, who worked the Works of Darkness, and had thereby forfeited the Protection of God's Providence. He adds, as a Reason for his Journey, that their Friend Lazarus was asleep, and that

<sup>a</sup> Joh. xi. 1, &c.

he must go, that he might awake him out of Sleep. *The Disciples*, still unwilling to hear of a Journey into *Judæa*, replied that if he was got into a good Sleep, he would do well. They either could not, or did not care to understand him. Jesus then told them plainly, that *Lazarus* was dead; and that he was glad for their Sakes that he was not there, to the Intent they might believe. But (faith he) let us go unto him. Thomas, seeing he was determined to go, spake to his Fellow Disciples in a desponding and sullen Manner—Let us also go, that we may die with him—He seems to have thought, that they had brought themselves into no small Difficulties by becoming our Lord's Disciples; that *Lazarus* was dead, and Jesus could not help him; and that they must expect to share the same Fate, especially as their Master thus seemed to court Danger.

\* They followed him however, but with Fear and Trembling, afraid, and amazed. Jesus took the twelve Apostles apart, and told them, that he was now going up to Jerusalem, and that what they feared would really come to pass, that he should be betrayed unto the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and they should condemn him to Death, and should deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; but that the third Day he should rise

\* Matt. xx. 17, &c. Mar. x. 32, &c. Luk. xviii. 31, &c.  
again.

again.<sup>1</sup> These things he had foretold to his Disciples before; but never so fully, and particularly, as now. The particular Circumstances of his being delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, and crucified, we find now first mentioned. These were Circumstances which no human Foresight could have discovered; and they were most punctually verified in the Event. They were certainly most strange Doctrines to his Disciples, and seemed to them impossible: *They understood none of these Things,* (says St. Luke) *and this Saying was hid from them, neither knew they the Things, which were spoken.*

Their Thoughts were intent on other Matters. The Promise, which he had lately made them of *sitting upon Thrones, and judging the Tribes of Israel,* seemed to them a more agreeable, and intelligible Doctrine, than this of his Sufferings, and Death.<sup>2</sup> *James therefore, and John, the Sons of Zebedee, came with their Mother, petitioning him, that they might sit, one on his Right Hand, and the other on his Left, in his Kingdom.* As these two Apostles had received several peculiar Favours from our *Lord,* and as they thought their Mother had a particular Interest in him, they got her to prefer this Request in their Behalf, hoping, that as all the Apostles would be invested with Authority under their

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 21. xvii. 22, 23. See p. 164, &c. <sup>2</sup> Matt. xx. 20, &c. Mar. x. 35, &c.

Master,

Master, so they might obtain the chief Pre-eminence above the rest, and as they were to sit on twelve Thrones, themselves might sit on the highest, and most honourable Thrones, one on his Right Hand, and the other on the Left. Jesus told them, that they knew not what they asked. Are ye able (says he) to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with? They, eager to obtain their Suit, and little considering what they said, answered that they were able. He replied, that they should drink indeed of his Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism that he was baptized with, that is, they should suffer after his Example; but the chief Places of Pre-eminence under him <sup>b</sup> he could give only to those for whom his Father had appointed them. The rest of the Apostles hearing of this Request of James and John, were moved with Indignation against them. Our Lord therefore called them all to him, and explained what he had before said of the Authority,

<sup>a</sup> εἰς τὸν ἡμέραν ἀλλ' (i. e. εἰ μὲν) οἱ ἵτοι πατεῖσαι. See Grotii Annot. <sup>1</sup> This Discourse of our Saviour is mentioned by St. Luke, Chap. xxii. 24, &c. as delivered at another Time, at his last Supper. Our Lord might possibly think fit to repeat this useful Caution to them; Or the Apostles might not immediately hear of this Request of James and John, and the Strife among them; Or at least the Notice which our Lord took of it, might be some Time afterward, at the Time mentioned by St. Luke.

which they were to have under him. His *Kingdom* was not to be like the Kingdoms of this World, nor were his Ministers to *exercise Dominion* like the *Princes of the Gentiles*. They too often thought that their Subjects were made for their Sakes alone, and made Use of their Authority merely to serve their own Interest and Pleasures—*κατακυρεῖν τὸν ἄλλον καὶ ξεποιάζειν αὐτὸν*—they ruled their Subjects with a high Hand, and kept them under severe Bondage. But the Rulers in the *Christian Church* were to exercise their Authority in a quite different Manner: They were not to aim at Pomp, or Riches: They were not to seek their own, but the People's, Profit; and the greatest among them was only to have the painful Pre-eminence of serving most laboriously for the Good of the Church, undergoing the greatest Hardships, and being exposed to the greatest Dangers, and sharpest Persecutions. Such Rule they were to bear, as they saw their Master before them invested with, who appeared in the *Form of a Servant*, and *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*; whom they saw daily exposed to Danger, and would soon see delivered up to Death for the Good of Mankind.

\* At Jericho our *Lord* was received by *Zaccheus*, a rich Man, and chief among the Publicans. All the People were offended at this, and *murmured*,

\* Luk. xix. 1, &c.

*saying*

saying, that he was gone to be Guest with a Man that is a Sinner. But Jesus applauded the Zeal, and good Disposition, which he shewed, and said unto him, This Day is Salvation come to this House, forasmuch as he also is the Son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Thus did our Lord take all Occasions of shewing the Acceptableness of Repentance, and teaching the Jews not to value themselves on their own Righteousness, not to judge too uncharitably of Publicans and Sinners, nor give over such Persons as reprobate and incorrigible.

<sup>1</sup> As Jesus departed from Jericho, a great Multitude followed him. And there were two blind Men sit-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 29, &c. Mar. x. 46, &c. Luk. xviii. 35, &c. St. Matthew and St. Mark both say that this happened as our Lord departed from Jericho. St. Luke expresses it—*εἰς ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς Ἰεριχό*—which may be rendered—as he was nigh to Jericho—and so he agrees very well with the other. See Ch. xix. 29, & Grotii Annot. Or perhaps, as Jesus entered into Jericho, one blind Man might petition him, and Jesus might pass by regardless of him: And as he went out again, another blind Man might have joined the first, and our Lord might then heal them both. See Maldonat. Annot. Macknight Harm. Or possibly Bartimæus the blind Man might be sitting by the Way, when Jesus entered into Jericho, but might not know who he was till he was passed by: But hearing the Noise of the Multitudes, he asked what it meant; and so might take care to put himself in his Way, when he left Jericho; and by this Time another blind Man, for the same Reason might have placed himself there.

ting by the Way-side, and begging, who cried out, saying, *Have Mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* The Multitudes would have silenced them, but Jesus stood still, and called them, and restored them to their Sight, telling them that *their Faith had saved them.* This was a plain Approbation of their Faith, an Acknowledgment that he was *the Son of David,* <sup>m</sup> the *Messiah,* whom the Jews expected.

<sup>n</sup> Jesus now drew nigh to Jerusalem; a great Multitude followed him: The Miracle he had wrought on the blind Men, and his Acceptance of their Confession, convinced them that he was *the Son of David.* They therefore, expecting no other than a temporal *Messiah,* thought it was now high Time that he should enter on his *Kingdom,* and take on him the Title and Authority of *King of the Jews:* They thought that the *Kingdom of God should immediately appear.* To check therefore their Zeal, and correct their false Notions, he spake a Parable of a Nobleman, who went into a far Country to receive for himself a Kingdom, &c. This Parable is taken from the Manner of the Kings of those Times, who were dependent on the *Romans,* and who, on their Accession, were obliged to go to *Rome* to be confirmed in their *Kingdoms.* It seems to refer particularly to a late Transaction, then in every one's Memory, in the Case of Ar-

<sup>m</sup> See Matt. xii. 23. ix. 27. xxi. 9. xxii. 42. Joh. vii. 42. <sup>n</sup> Luk. xix. 11, &c.

chelaus, <sup>o</sup> who went to *Rome* to obtain *Augustus's* Confirmation. But the *Jews* sent Deputies after him with Articles of Accusation. However he obtained the *Kingdom*, and severely avenged himself on those, who had been his *Enemies*. Our *Lord's* Design herein was to shew, after his usual Manner, by a *Parable*, that he was indeed *the King of the Jews*; but that he was not to enter on his *Kingdom* in such Time and Manner, as they imagined; that he was first to go from hence before he was to be invested in his *Kingdom*; that the *Jews* should *bate* and oppose him, but that he should come again with Power, and severely punish those, who refused to own him for their *King*; (and here also is prophetically pointed out the Destruction of *Jerusalem*); that, during his Absence, his *Servants* should have their several Offices and Employments allotted them; and that, on his Return, he should call them to Account for their Behaviour in them.

<sup>p</sup> Let us now accompany our *Lord* to *Bethany*, where he found *Lazarus* dead, and buried already four Days, his Sisters weeping, and their Acquaintance from *Jerusalem* assembled, according to the Custom of the Country, to comfort them. But *Jesus* went to the *Grave*, and called with a loud

<sup>o</sup> *Joseph.* Ant. Jud. Lib. xvii Cap. 9, 13. Bell. Jud. Lib. ii. Cap. 2, 6.    <sup>p</sup> Joh. xi. 17, &c.

Voice to Lazarus to come forth. And he that was dead came forth, with his Hands, and Feet, and Face, bound in the same Manner, in which he was buried. This, as it is one of the greatest Miracles recorded of our Lord, so it seems to have been wrought more purposely than any other to bear Testimony to his Divine Mission. He told his Disciples before, that he went to awake Lazarus out of Sleep; and that his Sickness happened, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby: He assured Martha that her Brother should rise again; and that, if she would believe, she should see the Glory of God: He told her, that he was the Resurrection and the Life, and that whosoever lived and believed in him, should never die; and she publickly acknowledged him to be the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the World. The Miracle was wrought before many Witnesses, Enemies as well as Friends. He began with a solemn Address to God, whom he calls his Father, and thanked him that he had heard him: And he publickly declared that he offered up this Thanksgiving because of the People which stood by, that they might believe that God had sent him. He called to Lazarus with a loud Voice, and bade him come forth. And the Time he had lain in the Grave, four Days already, and his Manner of coming forth, bound Hand and Foot, with Grave-Clothes, and his Face bound about with a Napkin, so that he could not easily stir, or breathe, preclude all Suspicion

picion of Imposture. And accordingly we find, *many of the Jews were convinced by so notable a Miracle, and believed on him.*

\* But others went to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. The Pharisees and chief Priests were alarmed, and met in Council, to consider what was to be done on this Occasion. They saw plainly that he did many Miracles, and this last Miracle, as it was in itself a most stupendous one, so was it wrought in a publick Manner, and purposely in Attestation of his Divine Mission. They therefore rightly argued, that, if they did not take proper Measures to prevent it, the People would believe on him, and set him up for their *Messiah*, and King. And, not being willing to believe that he really was the *Messiah*, they naturally enough concluded, that this would incense the Romans, and draw their Arms upon them, to the Destruction of their City and Country. They were therefore under no small Apprehensions; but Caiaphas, who was High-Priest that Year, told them there was no Time for long Deliberations; Necessity required that they should put Jesus to Death, to save themselves, and the whole Nation. He only meant to give a wicked Advice, that they were to scruple no Wickedness that was necessary for the Publick Good; but God so over-ruled his

\* Joh. xi, 46, &c.

Tongue,

Tongue, that his Words were a plain Prophecy of the End and Design of Christ's Death and Sufferings : *It is expedient that one Man should die for the People, and that the whole Nation perish not.*

It may seem strange, that such a Miracle as this did not work immediate Conviction, both on the People, and the *Chief Priests* themselves. But it is not uncommon for Passion, Prejudice, and worldly Interest, to overbear the strongest Conviction. Many popular Prejudices, as we have seen, lay against our *Saviour*, and the Interests of the Rulers were highly concerned ; and therefore it is not much to be wondered at, if the strongest Proofs served only to harden and exasperate them. We have seen their Behaviour all along consistent, and have found them on all Occasions ready to ascribe the plainest Miracles to any Cause, rather than to the Power of *God*. They were therefore prepared to listen to this wicked, but politick, Advice of their *High-Priest*,<sup>1</sup> and accordingly, *from that Day forth they took Counsel to put Jesus to Death*. Orders were given to search for him, and every one, who knew where he was, was required to make Discovery of him. *And the Passover being now nigh at Hand*, Enquiry was made after him among those, who came up to purify themselves before the *Passover*, it being imagined that he would not neglect

<sup>1</sup> See p. 187.      <sup>2</sup> Joh. xi. 53, &c.

his Duty of Attendance at this publick Festival. But Jesus, willing to avoid all Occasion of Tumult, or Sedition, chose for the present to retire with his Disciples unto a Country near the Wilderness; <sup>¶</sup> he did not choose as yet to appear publickly among the Jews.

But Jesus did not stay long in this Retirement. He soon after returned to Bethany, where he supped in the House of Simon the Leper, and Lazarus was one of them that sat at the Table with him. His Sister Martha served, and Mary took an Alabaster Box of precious Ointment, and poured it on his Head, as he sat at Meat: And with the same Ointment she anointed his Feet, and wiped his Feet with her Hair: And the House was filled with the Odour of the Ointment. Some of the Disciples were displeased at this Action, and particularly Judas Iscariot. He pretended that this was a great Waste made to very little Purpose: This Ointment, he said, might have been sold for much, and given to the Poor. But this was only a Pretence. He was, it

<sup>¶</sup> οὐκ ἐν μαρπόνιαις μεμνάται εὐ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις.

<sup>¶</sup> Matt. xxvi.

6, &c. Mar. xiv, 3, &c. Joh. xii, 1, &c. It seems to be the same Supper mentioned in these three Chapters, most of the main Circumstances agreeing. Simon the Leper might be a near Relation, or intimate Acquaintance of Lazarus and his Sisters, or they might live in his House. The Circumstance of Lazarus being mentioned as one of them that sat at the Table with him, seems to imply that he was not Master of the House. See Hammond Annot.

seems.

seems, our *Lord's* Treasurer, and had the Bag, which he thought fit to turn to his own Advantage : It was himself therefore, and not the Poor, that he cared for : He was angry that so considerable a Booty should escape him. But our *Lord* was not so much concerned for his Purse, as his Purse-bearer was. He approved of *Mary's* Zeal, and said, that she had wrought a good Work on him : He told them, that the Poor they should have always with them, but him they should not have always. For in that she had poured this Ointment on his Body, she had done it — πρὸς τὸ ἐνταφίου μὲν — by way of embalming him — or, as St. Mark expresses it — She is come beforehand to anoint my Body to the burying. Thus did he presignify to them his approaching Passion. He added, that wheresoever this *Gospel* should be preached in the whole World, there also this that this Woman had done should be told for a Memorial of her.

<sup>w</sup> It being known that Jesus was there, many of the Jews resorted there, at which the Chief Priests were so enraged, that they consulted to put Lazarus also to Death, because that by Reason of him many went away, and believed on Jesus.

<sup>w</sup> Joh. xii. 9, &c.

## C H A P. VI.

<sup>x</sup> **W**HILST the *Chief Priests* were thus plotting our *Saviour's Death*, he, to their great Surprise and Confusion, throwing aside now his Reserve, made a publick Entry into *Jerusalem*. He came riding on a *young Ass*, <sup>y</sup> like the Judges, and Kings of old; his *Disciples* attended him, rejoicing, and praising *God with a loud Voice*, for all the mighty *Works* that they had seen. And a very great Multitude spread their Garments in the Way, others cut down Branches from the Trees, and strawed them in the Way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, <sup>z</sup> *Hosannah to the Son of David*: *Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the*

<sup>x</sup> Matt. xxi. 1, &c. Mar. xi. 1, &c. Luk. xix. 28, &c.  
Joh. xiii. 12, &c. <sup>y</sup> Jud. v. 10. <sup>x</sup> 4. 1 Kings i. 33, 38. <sup>z</sup> *Hosannah* is a Corruption of the Hebrew—**הָסָנָה**—Save now. This Acclamation is much the same as we find Psal. cxviii. 25, 26. which Psalm seems to have been used on some publick Entry of *David* into *Jerusalem* on some solemn Occasion. See *Hammond* Annot. And the Titles of *Son of David*—*He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*—are significative of the *Messiah*. So that this was no less than a solemn Inauguration, and Acknowledgment of *Iesu* for their King, and *Messiah*.

*Lord,*

*Lord, Hosannah in the highest.* But in the midst of these joyful Acclamations, he shed Tears, when he approached *Jerusalem*, foreseeing the Destruction which would soon fall on this rebellious and ungrateful City, which had persecuted him all his Life-time, and would soon put him to a shameful Death. He expressed his earnest Wishes, that *she had known the things which belonged unto her Peace*, and foretold, that this sad Vengeance would overtake her, because *she knew not the Time of her Visitation.* When he was come into *Jerusalem*, all the City was moved, saying, *Who is this?* And the Multitude said, *This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.* What chiefly occasioned this Concourse of People, and induced them to bring our *Lord* into *Jerusalem* in this triumphant Manner, was the late Miracle wrought on *Lazarus*. <sup>a</sup> St. John tells us, that *the People that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his Grave, bare Record;* and that *for this Cause the People also met him, for that they heard that he had done this Miracle.*

<sup>b</sup> Being thus invested with Authority, and supported by the People, *he went into the Temple, and cast out the Money-changers, and Sellers of Merchandise,* <sup>c</sup> who had, it seems, now again taken Possession of the outer Court of the Temple, and said unto them, *It is written, My House shall be*

<sup>a</sup> Joh. xii. 17.      <sup>b</sup> Matt. xxi. 12, &c.    Mar. xi. 15, &c.  
Luk. xix. 45, &c.    <sup>c</sup> See above p. 55, &c.

*called of all Nations the House of Prayer, but ye have made it a Den of Thieves. And here in the Temple be taught daily, and wrought Miracles, healing the Blind and the Lame, who came to him in the Temple.*

The *Chief Priests and Pharisees* were (as we may very well imagine) very much confounded, and offended at these Proceedings. <sup>4</sup> They said among themselves, *Perceive ye how we prevail nothing? Behold the World is gone after him.* <sup>5</sup> Some of them, as he was upon the Road, called to him to rebuke his *Disciples*. But he was so far from forbidding them, or disowning the Titles which they gave him, that he told the *Pharisees*, *that if these should hold their Peace, the Stones would immediately cry out.* <sup>6</sup> And again in the Temple the *Chief Priests and Scribes*, when they saw the wonderful Things that he did, and the Children crying, and saying, *Hosannah to the Son of David*, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, *Hearest thou what these say?* But he neither disowned, nor discouraged these Acclamations; he answered boldly, *Yea;* and quoted the Text of the *Psalmist* in their Vindication — <sup>7</sup> *Out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou hast perfected Praise.*

But, though our *Lord* from henceforward acted with much less Reserve, than he had hitherto

<sup>4</sup> Joh. xii. 19.    <sup>5</sup> Luk. xix. 39, 40.    <sup>6</sup> Matt. xxi. 15, 16.    <sup>7</sup> Psal. viii. 2.

usually done, yet still he found himself obliged to act with some Caution and Circumspection. He had now fulfilled the Time of his Ministry, and knew that his Hour was come : He was therefore no longer in Fear of the Displeasure of the *Chief Priests*, and *Pharisees* : He rather chose to do every thing which might offend, and provoke them : He rebuked them with great Boldness, and Severity : He appeared publickly, and wrought Miracles openly before them : He suffered his Disciples, and others, publickly to call him *the Son of David, the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord*, that is, in Effect, the *Messiah* ; and refused to rebuke, or forbid, them : He himself, both by Words and Deeds, gave such Intimations that he was the *Messiah*, as they could not but understand, and as, we shall find, they actually did understand. But still he avoided saying, or doing, any thing which might give Offence to the *Roman Government*, or afford any colourable Accusation against him. It is accordingly observable, that though he gave strong Intimations that he was the *Messiah*, and such as his Enemies could not but understand, yet he still did it in a covert Manner, such as they could not lay hold on. He never to the last in direct Words professed himself to be the *Christ* ; nor could he by any Arts be prevailed on to make any Declaration, which could be brought in Testimony against him. He knew he was to suf-

fer, but he would not suffer as a Criminal, or a Rebel against *Cæsar*: He would not leave the World with such an Imputation on himself, and his Religion. And accordingly, he conducted himself throughout his whole Life, and particularly in this last Scene of it, with such Prudence and Caution, that his Enemies could find no Cause of Death in him. When they brought him before *Pilate*, and *Herod*, they could lay no Crime to his Charge; <sup>b</sup> and *Pilate* himself when he condemned him, at the same Time pronounced him innocent. This Entry into *Jerusalem* was perhaps as likely to alarm the Government, as any Action of his Life; but this was conducted in a Manner as little offensive as possible. He came riding on an *Aff*, a peaceable, and harmless Animal. <sup>c</sup> Such Equipage as this, as it was least likely to give Offence, so was it unfit for a Leader in War, or a Mover of Sedition. Kings and Governors had been formerly thus mounted; but then it was usually in peaceful Processions; and since Horses were grown more common in *Judæa*, by their Traffick with *Egypt*, Asses were disused, and thought below the Dignity of great Persons. If therefore this *riding upon an Aff* betokened him a King, it betokened him a peaceful one, <sup>d</sup> such as the Prophet describes; such as, though he brought *Salvation* unto his People,

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxvii. 24.    Joh. xix. 4.  
Dissert. 4.    <sup>c</sup> Zech. ix. 9, 10.

<sup>d</sup> See Bp. *Sherlock*,

should speak Peace to the Heathen, so far from leading the Nation to War, that he should cut off the Chariot from Ephraim, and the Horse from Jerusalem. His Demeanor in this Procession was lowly and meek: Whilst others sang Hosannas with loud Voices, he shed Tears; and, instead of spiriting up the People to Rebellion, he foretold, that their Enemies should lay their City even with the Ground, and her Children within her: And, though he suffered the Crowd to conduct him in a triumphant Manner into the City, and to the Temple, yet, when he came there, all the Acts of Authority he did, were to cast out them that sold and bought, and heal the Blind and the Lame.<sup>1</sup> When this was done, he left them, and went out of the City, again into Bethany, and lodged there. He departed, and did bide himself from them, saith St. John.<sup>m</sup> And afterwards, though he taught every Day in the Temple, yet every Evening he went back to the Mount of Olives, and lodged at Bethany; thus avoiding all Concource to him in the Night, and giving no Occasion of Disturbance, or Suspicion of himself, in that great Conflux of the whole Nation of the Jews, now assembled in Jerusalem at the Passover.

Let us next take a View of the Behaviour of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxi. 17. Mar. xi. 11. Joh. xii. 36. <sup>m</sup> H, δε τὰς ἡμέρας εὐ τῷ ιερῷ διδάσκοντας τὰς δὲ νύκτας ἐπεγχόμενος ἤνδιζετο εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ κυλαύμενον Ἐλαῦν. Luk. xxi. 37. Comp. Matt. xxi. 17. Mar. xi. 11, 12.

the

the *Chief Priests*, and *Pharisees*, on this Occasion. They were (as we have seen) highly enraged, when they saw this triumphant Procession. They had just before resolved to *put Jesus to Death*; but they were at a Loss how to carry this Resolution into Execution. The same Reasons, which had hitherto restrained them from touching him, were still in Force. They saw *the whole World gone after him*, and the People more attached to him than ever, and therefore were afraid to seize on him. <sup>n</sup> *They sought to destroy him*, (says St. Luke) *and could not find what they might do*; for all the People were very attentive to hear him. <sup>o</sup> *When they sought to lay Hands on him*, (says St. Matthew) *they feared the Multitude*, because they took him for a Prophet. Another Reason, which tied their Hands, was the Want of Matter of Accusation against him. They could find no Proof of any criminal Offence, and therefore they had Recourse to Subtlety, <sup>p</sup> and *took Counsel how they might entangle him in his Talk*. <sup>q</sup> *They watched him* (says St. Luke) *and sent forth Spies, which should feign themselves just Men, that they might take hold of his Words, that so they might deliver him unto the Power and Authority of the Governor*. But he (as we shall presently see)

<sup>n</sup> Luk. xix. 47, 48.      <sup>o</sup> Matt. xxi. 46.      <sup>p</sup> Matt. xxii.  
15.      <sup>q</sup> Luk. xx. 20.

eluded all their Artifices with most admirable Wisdom and Dexterity.

But to return to our *Lord*, whose triumphant Entry into *Jerusalem* had surprised the whole City, and alarmed his Enemies. His Fame had also reached the Ears of certain *Greeks*,<sup>5</sup> or Proselytes of the Gate, who came up among the rest to worship at this Feast. They had probably heard of our *Saviour's* Miracles, and were desirous to see him, to be admitted into his Presence, and have a personal Conference with him. This their *Desire* they signified to *Philip*. *Philip*, imagining that there might be some Difficulty in the thing, as they were Heathens, and uncircumcised Persons, first consulted *Andrew*; and they both agreed to mention their Request to *Jesus*. Our *Lord*, well knowing that any Encouragement, which he could give to these *Greeks*, would give Offence, and probably occasion some Disturbance, puts them off with a general Answer, and, by retiring to *Bethany* privately, bid himself from them, and avoided their Importunity, and that of others. He answered them, saying — Ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα — <sup>1</sup> *The Hour is coming when the Son of Man shall be glorified.*  
<sup>2</sup> What was said just before of our *Lord's* riding on

<sup>1</sup> Joh. xii. 20, &c. <sup>2</sup> See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.* <sup>3</sup> The Perfect Tense is, according to the Hebrew Idiom, used in a Future Sense. Thus Joh. xx. 17. Οὐπώ γέ τις αὐτοῦ πρός τὸν πατέρα με — *I shall not yet ascend to my Father.* See *Gloss. Philol. Sacr. Lib. iii. Tract. 3. Can. 46.* <sup>4</sup> See above p. 59.

*the Ass*, may perhaps not improperly be applied here—*These things understood not his Disciples at the first*. They might possibly so far understand, that he was willing to decline the Honour designed. *The Hour*, he tells them, *was soon to come, when he should be glorified*, and then he leaves them to conclude, he should receive *Greeks*, as well as *Jews*; but his Death, he intimates, was first to intervene: *As a Grain of Wheat must first be buried in the Ground, and die*, before it can flourish, and bring forth *Fruit*, so he would suggest, that he must first die, before his Kingdom should come with *Glory*. And the same Fate must also his Followers expect: They must prepare for Persecution and Death here, and must expect Honour, not here, but with him in the next World. Whilst he was thus discoursing of his own Death and Sufferings, a natural Horror of his approaching Passion seizes on him, and he breaks out into this pathetick Exclamation—*Now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this Hour: But for this Cause came I unto this Hour. Father, glorify thy Name.*\* He was answered by a Sound of Thunder, and an articulate *Voice from Heaven*, saying, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again*. This greatly surprised the People; some took Notice only of the *Thunder*; others plainly heard the

\* See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.*

Voice, and said, *An Angel spake to him.* Jesus told them, that *this Voice came not because of him, but for their Sakes;* that *now was the Judgement of this World;* and that *now the Prince of this World, the Devil, who had seduced the Heathen World to Idolatry, should be cast out.* He adds, that *when he was lifted up from the Earth — וְנִבְאַתָּה בְּרֵית יְהֹוָה — he should draw all Men unto him.* The Word *וְנִבְאַתָּה* seems here to have a peculiar Signification, and the same it seems to bear Job. iii. 14. viii. 28. \* It is observed by learned Men, that the Hebrew Word זָקֵף, which signifies to *erect*, or *lift up*, signifies in the Chaldee, and Syriack, to *hang*, or *crucify*; and that the Word זָקֵפָה, derived from thence, signifies a *Cross*. It is reasonable therefore to think, that the Word, which our *Saviour* made Use of in the Language then spoken, signified not barely to *lift up*, but to *lift up on the Cross*; and if so, this was in direct Terms foretelling his Crucifixion: And so the Evangelist himself explains it—*This he said, signifying what Death he should die.* And so also the People understood him—*We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?* It is also a plain Prediction of the Calling of the Gentiles. He

\* See Grotius on Joh. iii. 14. xii. 32. Bochart Hierozoicon, Tom. ii. Lib. 3. Cap. 13. p. 426. Buxtorf. Lexic. Chald.

foreshews, that after his Crucifixion he should draw draw all Men unto him, Greeks as well as Jews. But to their Question he would not give any direct Answer, but, speaking of himself under the Similitude of Light, gave them to understand, that he should continue but a little while with them ; and that they ought to make good Use of that short Time. And having thus spoken, he departed, and did bide himself from them.

The Evangelist observes on this Occasion, that though he had done so many Miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. And, though this may appear very strange, yet some probable Accounts may be given of this their Unbelief. The Miracle of Lazarus's Resurrection had very much engaged the People in his Favour. They attended him (as we have seen) into Jerusalem, with loud Acclamations, and proclaimed him their *Messiah*, and *King*. Had he aimed at temporal Dominion, he could never have had a fairer Opportunity. This was what his Enemies feared; nor would either Impostor, or Enthusiast, have neglected such an Opportunity. But he gave but very little Encouragement to these his zealous Votaries; on the contrary withdrew himself, and avoided them. Nor did he seem forward to accept of a Crown; nor did he feed them with Promises of Prosperity, and Victory; but on the contrary, foretold the Destruction

of their City, and his own Sufferings and Death. They could not relish these mysterious Discourses ; they could not bear to hear of a crucified Saviour, of a Son of Man, who was to be lifted up : Their Heads were full of a temporal *Messiah*, who should lead them to Battle, and free them from the *Roman Yoke*. This was what blinded their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts. But however, the Miracles he wrought were not without their Effect : Not only among the Multitude, but among the chief Rulers also, many believed on him ; but they dared not profess their Belief, for Fear of being put out of the Synagogue. <sup>a</sup> The Pharisees and Rulers had denounced the Sentence of Excommunication against all who confessed that he was the Christ ; and this was a powerful Restraint upon all such, as valued their Reputation, or their worldly Interest.

<sup>a</sup> Next Morning, as our Lord was coming from Bethany to Jerusalem, he was hungry, and seeing a Fig-tree afar off having Leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon. <sup>b</sup> The usual Time of ripe Figs was not yet come. But in that Climate, it is usual for some forward and vigorous Trees, to yield a few ripe Figs some Weeks before the full Season. As therefore the Fruit of this Tree in those Countries always precedes the Leaves, and

<sup>a</sup> Joh. ix. 22.    <sup>a</sup> Matt. xxi. 18, &c. Mar. xi. 12, &c.

<sup>b</sup> See Shaw's Travels p. 370.

as this Tree appeared flourishing, and full of *Leaves*, our *Lord* hoped to find some *Fruit* on it to satisfy his *Hunger*. But *finding nothing thereon but Leaves only*, he said, *Let no Fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever*. And presently the *Fig-tree* withered away. This Action was certainly designed to presignify the Destruction of the *Jewiſh Nation*, which like this Tree, pretended to, and promised, much *Fruit*, but was found barren and unprofitable, and was therefore under a Curse; though the present Use which our *Saviour* made of it, was to shew the Power of *Faith*, and Prevalency of *Prayer*.

*The Chief Priests and Elders*, being (as we have seen) highly offended, and enraged, at his open and bold Proceeding, sought all Means to ensnare him. The first Attempt they made was in the *Temple*, where they found him *teaching the People*, and *preaching the Gofpel*. They came upon him therefore, and asked him by what Authority he did these Things, and who gave him Authority to do these Things. By these Means they hoped either to accuse him, as preaching, and acting, without proper Authority, or else to draw from him some explicit Declaration who he was, which they might lay hold on. But he very artfully declined giving them a direct Answer. He desired first to ask them one Question—*The Baptism of John whence*

*• Matt. xxi. 23, &c.. Mar. xi. 27, &c.. Luk. xx. 1, &c.*

was it ? from Heaven, or of Men ? To this Question they did not know what to answer. They had not admitted *John* for a Prophet ; and therefore they could not say that his Commission was *from Heaven* without condemning themselves : And they dared not say *it was of Men* ; for this would offend *the People*, who in general *held him as a Prophet*. Their *Answer* therefore was, that *they could not tell*. *Jesus* replied—*Neither tell I you by what Authority I do these things*. A very prudent Way this of dealing with these Men. He catches them in the like Dilemma, which they had sought to bring him into ; and as hereby he waved giving them an explicit Answer, so at the same Time he gave them a good Reason why they ought to expect none. *John* had given them sufficient Proof of his being a Prophet, and yet they obstinately persisted in Unbelief ; and therefore our *Lord* had little Reason to hope they would be satisfied with any Declaration, which he could make of the Authority, by which he acted. He then by a Parable of a *Father* and his *two Sons*, draws from them a Confession, that a repentant Sinner was preferable to a false Hypocrite. He applies this home to them, and tells them, that *the Publicans and the Harlots* would go into the Kingdom of God before *them* ; would be more ready to receive the *Messiah*, and were better prepared to be his Subjects, than they. *For the Publicans and the Harlots believed John the Preacher*

of Righteousness; but they refused to acknowledge him, and still persisted in their Unbelief.

But it was usual with our *Lord*, when he avoided declaring openly who he was, by way of *Parable*, or some such covert Method, to give sufficient Intimations of what he did not choose to say in direct and explicit Terms. To this Purpose he added two *Parables*. <sup>a</sup> The first was of *an Householder*, which planted a *Vineyard*, and let it out to *Husbandmen*, and went into a far *Country*. And when the Time of the *Fruit* drew near, he sent his *Servants* to receive the *Fruits* of his *Vineyard*. But the *Husbandmen* took his *Servants*, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. But last of all he sent unto them his *Son*, saying, They will reverence my *Son*. But him also they caught, and cast him out of the *Vineyard*, and slew him. Our *Lord* then asked them, what the *Lord* of the *Vineyard* would do unto those *Husbandmen*? They, either not at first perceiving his Drift, or compelled by the Force of Truth, answered, that he would miserably destroy those wicked Men, and let out his *Vineyard* unto other *Husbandmen*, who would render him the *Fruits* in their Seasons. But when he applied this more plainly to them, and told them, that the *Kingdom* of God should be taken from them, and given to a Nation bringing forth the *Fruits* thereof, they said, God forbid. Jesus replied — <sup>b</sup> What is

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxi. 33, &c. Mar. xii. 1, &c. Luk. xx. 9, &c.  
<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxviii. 22.

this then that is written, *The Stone which the Builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the Corner?* *Whosoever shall fall upon that Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to Powder.* The Application of all this was very obvious; and the Chief Priests and Pharisees but too plainly understood him, and knew that he had spoken the Parable against them. <sup>f</sup> The People of Israel are frequently in the Prophets compared to a Vine, and a Vineyard. *Isaiah* in particular prosecutes this Similitude at large, and explains himself, saying, *The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel;* and from this Passage of *Isaiah* many of the Circumstances, and very Words of this Parable are borrowed. By the Wickedness of these Husbandmen, is pointed out the rebellious Disposition of the Jews in rejecting, and persecuting the Prophets, which were sent to them, and particularly the Obstinacy of the Chief Priests and Pharisees in not believing *John the Baptist.* His own Death is also here foretold; and the Rejection and Destruction of the Jewish Nation not only represented in the Parable, but denounced in plain Terms. His own Divine Commission and Messiahship is also clearly pointed out: He gives them to understand, that he was sent to them by God; that he

<sup>f</sup> If. v. 1, &c. xxvii. 2, &c. Jer. ii. 21. Ezek. xv. 6. xvii. 6, &c. xix. 10, &c. Hos. x. 1. Psal. lxxx. 8, &c.

was the Only Son of God ; that he was the Stone, which though rejected by the Builders, should become the Head of the Corner ; and that he should severely punish those who rejected him. Thus does he tell them plainly enough, though under the Cover of a Parable, by what Authority he did these Things.

\* In another Parable he compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son, and sent his Servants to call them that were bidden to the Wedding. But they made light of the Invitation. Some of them went their Ways about their other Affairs ; and the Remnant took his Servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them. The King severely punished these ungrateful Men ; he sent forth his Armies, and destroyed those Murderers, and burnt up their City. And he sent out his Servants into the High-ways ; and from thence furnished his Wedding with Guests of all Sorts, as many as they found, both bad and good. But one of these appearing at the Feast without a Wedding-garment, he ordered him to be bound Hand and Foot, and cast into outer Darkness. This Parable is nearly the same as <sup>b</sup> he had delivered before on another Occasion, though with some Variations suitable to the present Circumstances. Like the former Parable it sets forth his Authority, and Divine Mission. It plainly

\* Matt xxii. 1, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Luk xiv. 16.

enough, though covertly, signifies, that *the Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, the Times of the *Messiah*, was then come; that he was that *Messiah, the Son of God*; that great was the Sin of the *Jews* in rejecting him, and severe would be their Punishment; they should be *destroyed, and their City burnt up*; that in their Room others should be called, all Men promiscuously, *both bad and good*; but that among those who should be *called*, none should be *chosen* and accepted, but those who came with proper Dispositions of Mind. This was the plain Meaning of these *Parables*, so plain, that his Enemies could not but understand him. *They perceived that he spake of them*; but, as they could not lay hold of his Words, so they were restrained by the *Fear of the People* from offering him any Violence.

<sup>1</sup> They had therefore Recourse to Subtilty and Artifice, and took Counsel how they might entangle him in his Talk. By putting captious Questions, they were in Hopes that they might draw something from him, which would either offend the People, or give them an Opportunity of delivering him unto the Power and Authority of the Governor. Their Management herein was very artful. The *Pharisees* did not come in a Body, or send any of the chief of their Sect, but sent forth Spies, some of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 15, &c. Mar. xii. 13, &c. Luk. xx. 20, &c. See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.* *Locke on Christianity*, p. 134, &c.

their Disciples, (*certain of the Pharisees*, says St. *Mark*), Persons probably unknown to *Jesus*. These, associating themselves with some of the *Herodians*, came to him, pretending themselves to be *just* and conscientious Persons, Admirers of him and his *Doctrine*; who looked on him as a Teacher sent from *God*, and desired to be resolved in an important Case of Conscience; doubting not but he would speak his Mind freely, as one, *who regarded not the Persons of Men, but taught the Way of God truly*, without Fear, or Affection. With this insidious Compliment they put to him the Question, whether it were lawful to give *Tribute unto Cæsar, or not*. The better to understand the Drift of this Question, we must consider, that the *Jewiſh* People bore the *Roman Yoke* with great Reluctance: They looked upon themselves as the peculiar People of *God*, a free-born Nation, which ought to be subject to no foreign Power: And consequently, the Generality of the People, and particularly the *Pharisees*, looked upon the *Roman Government* as an *Usurpation*, and held the *Exaction of Tribute* to be an *unlawful Demand*. But, as *Herod* and his Family had been made Kings by the Favour of the *Romans*, and enjoyed their Power under their Protection, as a Fief from them, they and their Adherents acknowledged the *Roman Authority*: And, after their Dominion was at an End, there still remained some of their Adherents, who were called

called *Herodians*, who retained the same Opinions, and courted the Favour of the *Romans*. With these Persons the *Pharisees* combined, \* (as they had before done for the like Purpose) that they might the more effectually entrap *Jesus*, being ready, one or other of them, to accuse him, which Way soever he should answer. If he had said that they ought to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*, this they thought would alienate the Affections of the People from him, who paid Tribute with great Regret. Besides, as this would be allowing the *Romans* to be their lawful Governors, it would be in Effect disowning himself to be their King, and Deliverer, whereby they thought he would contradict what his Carriage and Doctrine seemed to aim at, and convince the People that he was not their *Messiah*. On the other Hand, had he answered that it was not lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*, they would have had, what they had been long seeking for, something out of his own Mouth, which would have supported an Accusation before the *Roman Governor*. But *Jesus* immediately perceived their *Craftiness*, and very dexterously eluded their Artifice. *He said to them, Why tempt ye me, ye Hypocrites? Shew me the Tribute-Money.* And they brought unto him a Penny, the *Roman Denarius*, a Coin then current among the *Jews*, and in which the Tribute was usually paid. He

\* See Mar. iii. 6.

then asked them, *Whose Image and Superscription hath it?* They answered, *Cæsar's*: Then saith he unto them, *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.* By this wise Answer he quite disappointed these artful Spies. He taught them the Way of God truly, and shewed them the Necessity, and Reasonableness, of submitting to the Powers, which God had set over them, but in such Terms as could give no Offence, and as they could make no Advantage of. He leaves untouched the Point concerning the Lawfulness of the *Roman Government*; but proves by a familiar, and undeniable Argument, that Government, and Protection, by whatever Hand it is administered, demands *Tribute in Return*; and admonishes them to mind their Duty to God, and not concern themselves in Affairs of Government. And they could not take hold of his Words before the People; and they marvelled at his Answer, and held their Peace. It is observable, that notwithstanding this prudent Answer of our Lord,<sup>1</sup> yet one of the Articles of Accusation against him was, that he forbade to give *Tribute to Cæsar*, which plainly shews what Use they intended to make of it, if he had given them such an Answer as they expected.

<sup>m</sup> The next Attack our Lord met with was from

<sup>1</sup> Luk. xxiii. 2.      <sup>m</sup> Matt. xxii. 23, &c. Mar. xii. 18, &c. Luk. xx. 27, &c. See Hammond, Grotii Annot. Tillotson's Sermon on Luk. xx. 37, 38.

the Sadducees, who believed not in any future State, and thought to puzzle our *Lord* by a Case of a *Woman*, who had *seven Brethren* successively to her *Husbands*; upon which Case they put the Question to him—*Whose Wife shall she be of the Seven in the Resurrection?* This might be a difficult Question to the *Jews*, and possibly to the *Pharisees*, who seem to have had but imperfect Notions of a Future State. But our *Lord* with great ease resolves the Question, by shewing the different State of Men in this World, and in the other. He uses here no Ambiguity of Speech, but expresses himself in the most plain and explicit Terms : *He said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God. The Children of this World marry, and are given in Marriage. But they, which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither marry, nor are given in Marriage.* Nor does he barely assert this Doctrine, but he gives a plain and substantial Reason for it, because *they cannot die any more, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven.* In this World, where Men go off, and die continually, Marriage is necessary to continue a Succession of Mankind. But in the World to come, where none *die any more*, but all of us shall be, like the *Angels*, immortal, the Reason of Marriage will cease, inasmuch as there will be no Occasion for any farther Supplies. But our *Lord*, not content with giving  
a full

a full Answer to their Objection, and taking away the Ground and Foundation of it, proceeds to prove a Future State, by an Argument drawn from *Moses's Writings*, and such an Argument as was most apposite to the present Purpose and Occasion, and to the Persons with whom he had to deal. The *Sadducees* professed a particular Veneration for *Moses's Writings*, and their Objection was founded on a Case drawn from his Writings, as if they would thereby insinuate, that *Moses* himself was in their Sentiments. Our *Lord* therefore answers them by an Argument drawn from the Books of *Moses*: *Now that the Dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the Dead, but of the Living; for all live unto him.*—Even *Moses*—*Moses* himself, whom you so justly esteem, and under whose Authority you would shelter yourselves, plainly teaches a Future State. For he introduces *God*, as saying — *I am the God of Abraham, &c.*—long after the Death of those Patriarchs. <sup>a</sup> It is plain therefore that these Patriarchs were then existing; *for God is not a God of the Dead, but of the Living*: It follows that the Soul survives the Body, and Persons still continue to exist, and *live unto God*, after their Body is laid in the Dust: If these Patriarchs were

<sup>a</sup> Exod. iii. 6.

utterly

utterly perished, both Soul and Body, and were turned into Dust, never to revive again, God could with no Propriety be called *their* God. The Dust could not be called *Abraham*, *Isaac*, or *Jacob*; nor could it be entitled to any Privileges. This Argument concluded still more strongly against these *Sadducees*, as they, and all the Jews held *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* in the highest Veneration; and, as the Expression of God's being the God of any Person, imported in the Language of Scripture, and in the Notions of the Jews, some peculiar Privilege and Advantage belonging to that Person. Since therefore <sup>o</sup> God not only promised *Abraham to be a God unto him, and to his Seed after him*, but is peculiarly distinguished by this Title of *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, many Years after they were laid in their Graves, <sup>p</sup> and this is said *to be his Name for ever, and his Memorial unto all Generations*, it was plain that they were still, even after Death under God's Protection, and entitled to singular Privileges, and Blessings. Especially, if it be considered, that these Patriarchs did not enjoy in this World such singular Advantages above other Men, as this Promise imports: <sup>q</sup> *They confessed (as the Apostle argues) that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth, and that few, and evil, were the Days of their Life.* As therefore they expected,

<sup>o</sup> Gen. xvii. 7.    <sup>p</sup> Exod. iii. 15.    <sup>q</sup> Heb. xi. 13, &c.

Gen. xlvi. 9.

and desired a better Country, that is an heavenly, so God was not ashamed to be called their God, because he had prepared for them a City, and House eternal in the Heavens. This Argument put the Saducees to Silence. The Pharisees too could not but applaud his Answer. The Scribes said, Master, thou hast well said. And the Multitude were astonished at his Doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> The Pharisees, we read, were on this Occasion gathered together. They were amazed at his Understanding and Answers, and were at a Loss how to deal with him. However one of them, a Lawyer, or Scribe, thought fit to try him with one more Question. He tempting him, asked, Which is the first Commandment of all? This was, it seems, thought a difficult Question, and was much disputed among their Doctors. But to this Question also our Lord returned a very plain and explicit Answer: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law, and the Prophets. The Lawyer was struck with the Wisdom of this Answer, and ingenuously owned, that he had said the Truth; for to observe

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 34, &c. Mar. xii. 28, &c.  
Annot.

<sup>2</sup> See Grotii

these

these great Commandments was more than all whole Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices. Jesus was pleased with this wise Confession, and told him, that he was not far from the Kingdom of God. He, who acknowledged and practised these great Truths, was well prepared to embrace his Doctrine, and become his Disciple. Our Lord's Answers and Discourses gave general Satisfaction. *The common People heard him gladly;* his Enemies were confounded, and desisted from their Artifices, nor did they ever after attempt to ensnare, or puzzle him with difficult, or captious Questions.

\* Our Lord then thought fit to put a Question to them. *While the Pharisees were gathered together,* Jesus asked them, saying, *What think ye of Christ, whose Son is he?* They say unto him, *the Son of David.* He saith unto them, *How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord,* saying, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my Right Hand, till I make thine Enemies thy Footstool?* If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son? We might perhaps better understand the full Import of this Question, if we were more thoroughly acquainted with the Notions and Opinions of the Pharisees of those Days. One End we may plainly see our Saviour had in View was, to deal with these Pharisees in their own Way, to puzzle and confound them, and shew the People how little they understood their own *Scriptures.*

\* Matt. xxii. 41, &c. Mar. xii. 35. Luk. xx. 41, &c.  
Another

Another End our *Lord* might propose, was to give them more exalted Notions of the *Messiah*, to teach his Disciples not to look on him as a mere Man, but as *the Son of God*, superior to *David*, who, though he *came after David*, was *preferred before him*, for *he was before him*. No one indeed, who holds *Christ* to be a mere man, can answer this Question—*How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord?* These Words also imply *Christ's Kingdom* to be a spiritual *Kingdom*. *Christ* with regard to his human Nature was inferior to *David*, being *his Son*, and could in no temporal Sense be called *his Lord*, who was dead several Ages before *Christ* was born. Our *Lord's Question* had its intended Effect: *No Man was able to answer him a Word, neither durst any Man from that Day forth ask him any more Questions.*

▪ Our *Lord*, having thus put his Adversaries to Silence, proceeds to rebuke them, and expose their Doctrines and Practices, with no small Severity. Their malicious Opposition to him, and the many Corruptions, and Abuses prevalent amongst them, justified, and required such Treatment. His Discourse was addressed to his own *Disciples*, but *in the Audience of all the People*. He had often taken Occasion to reprove the Hypocrisy of *the Scribes and Pharisees*, and the false Glosses they put upon

\* Matt. xxiii. 1, &c. Mar. xii. 38, &c. Luk. xx. 45, &c.  
the

the Law; \* and not long before, in the House of one of the *Pharisees*, he had charged them with most of the Particulars here mentioned. But he never before, as we can find, exposed their Hypocrisy, Pride, and Ignorance, in so open and publick a Manner, as he did now. This Freedom of Speech, as it had its other Uses, so it served to hasten on the great Event of his Death. At the same time also that he rebukes these *Scribes and Pharisees*, he instructs his own Disciples. He teaches them to beware of Hypocrisy, and Pride, not to be fond, or proud, of high Titles; not to affect a Superiority over their Brethren; but to look upon themselves, however dignified or distinguished, as Fellow-Servants under the same *Master*, Brethren and Sons of the same *Father*. He teaches them to have a due Veneration, and pay a proper Regard to Oaths; to lay the greatest Stress on the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith; but not to neglect, or leave undone the slightest Precepts. He also here declares himself to be the *Christ*, in Terms plain enough to be understood, though not positive and express enough for them to lay hold on. He is speaking to his Disciples; and he tells them, that *one is their Master, even Christ*. And again, he charges the *Scribes and Pharisees* with shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men; for (says he) ye neither go in yourselves,

\* See Luk. xi. 39. &c.

neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in, which might give them to understand, that the Kingdom of Heaven, or of the Messiah, was already begun. \* He concludes his Discourse, with a Denunciation of severe Punishment on them for their Disbelief, and Persecution of the Prophets, and Messengers of God, and foretells, that it should overtake them in this very Generation. And he tells them, that they should not see him henceforth, till they should say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* \* He had before foretold the *Desolation of Jerusalem* in the very same Words, on another Occasion; unless we may suppose some Dislocation in one of the *Evangelists*. We interpreted there these latter Words, as referring to what passed on his triumphant Entry into *Jerusalem*. He seems here to use them in another Sense, and to refer to some Advent yet to come, and to some future Conversion of the Jews. This seems to be the last Discourse he made to the Jews. After these Words he went

\* The Construction here is somewhat difficult. The 31<sup>st</sup> Verse should be read in a Parenthesis; and then the Charge of Hypocrisy against these *Scribes and Pharisees* will run thus —*Wo unto them*, because they express great Respect for the Prophets, building and adorning their Sepulchres, and condemning their Fathers, who shed their Blood, whilst at the same Time they did the same, and worse, and filled up (some Copies read *iniquitous*) the Measure of their Iniquities. See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.*

\* See Luk. xiii 34, 35.

*out of the Temple,* and never, as I can find, entered into it again. This was then his farewell Speech on his leaving them, and their Temple. He tells them, that *their House should be left unto them desolate*, and that he should never return to them any more, till they should be ready to welcome him in a better Manner. And *their House* has accordingly continued *desolate* ever since.

Soon after our *Lord* more fully, and particularly, foretold the same Event. <sup>2</sup> As he departed from the Temple, some of his *Disciples* took Notice of the Grandeur and Magnificence of that Structure, how it was adorned with goodly Stones, and Gifts. Jesus said unto them, *As for these things which ye behold, the Days will come, in the which there shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* We may well suppose that the *Disciples* were amazed at these Predictions. They expected that our *Lord* should immediately enter on the Possession of his Kingdom, and restore the State of the *Jews*. But these Denunciations of Destruction both on the *City*, and *Temple of Jerusalem*, <sup>3</sup> which Jesus had so often lately repeated, seemed to be quite inconsistent with such Hopes. And therefore they thought it necessary to ask him, both when these Predictions were to take Place, and what was to be the *Sign of his own*

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxiv. 1, &c. Mar. xiii. 1, &c. Luk. xxi. 5, &c.

<sup>3</sup> See Luk. xiii. 34, &c. xix. 41. &c.

*Coming.* They were afraid to question him publickly ; but, as soon as they were got out of the City, and were by themselves *on the Mount of Olives*, some of the chief of them took this Opportunity to ask him privately, saying, *Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* • It is reasonable to interpret these Questions according to the Notions of the Jews in those Times. By *his Coming*, I suppose, they meant the Time, when he was publickly to take upon him the Title, and Authority of the *Messiah*, of which they thought Notice was to be given by some extraordinary *Sign*, on which all the Jews were to flow in unto him, and proclaim him their King. By *the End of the World*, in the Original— $\tauῆς συντέλειας τῆς ἀιῶνος$ —they probably meant the End of the Mosaical Dispensation. The Jews usually reckoned two *Age*s, the present Age, i. e. the Time of the Mosaical Dispensation ; and the *Age* to come, i. e. the Days of the *Messiah*. <sup>c</sup> Συντέλεια τῆς ἀιῶνος therefore may signify the Shutting up, or Conclusion of the Jewish State, and the Commencement of

• See above p. 58. See also *Hammond*, *Grotius*, *Whitby*, *Lighthill Hor. Heb.*

<sup>c</sup> Thus Συντέλεια τῆς ἀιῶνος plainly signifies Heb. ix. 26. and πὲ γὰρ τῶν αἰώνων 1 Cor. x. 11. though our Saviour indeed uses the Expression συντέλεια τῆς ἀιῶνος to signify the Time of the general Judgment, the Consummation of all things. Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49.

the State of the *Messiah*. Our *Saviour* answered these Questions at large : He said, *Take heed that no Man deceive you. For many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* These Words convey a plain Intimation that he was the *Christ*. The following Part of his Answer contains a plain Prophecy of the Destruction of *Jerusalem* : <sup>4</sup> In Matt. xxiv from v. 6 to v. 29 are foretold the several Events preceding that Destruction ; the many *Wars* and *Commotions* in *Judea* ; *Famines, Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places* ; the *Persecutions* of the *Christians* by the *Jews*, and *Heathens* ; the *Defection* of many of them ; the *Divisions* amongst them by Means of *Pretenders*, and *false Prophets* ; the *Publication* of the *Gospel* in that Time throughout all Parts of the then known World ; <sup>5</sup> the *investing* of Je-

<sup>4</sup> See also Mar. xiii. 7-23. Luk. xxi. 9-23.

<sup>5</sup> By the *Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place* Matt. xxiv. 15. is meant the *Investiture* of *Jerusalem* by the *Roman Armies*, as appears by comparing this Place with Luk. xxi. 20. The word *Abomination* is frequently used in Scripture to signify an *Idol* ; and the very Phrase here used—the *Abomination of Desolation*—is applied in Macc. i. 54. to the setting up an *Idol upon the Altar*. It is here applied to the *Roman Armies* because they carried on their Ensigns Images, to which they paid Worship, for which Reason the *Jews* often expressed great *Zeal*, and earnestly petitioned against bringing these Ensigns into *Jerusalem*, which they called the *Holy City*. These Ensigns are called *the Abomination of Desolation* both by

*rusalem* by the *Roman Armies*, and the *Tribulation* thereon following ; the *arising of false Christs, and false Prophets* among the *Jews*, who should deceive them with *false Hopes of Deliverance*. And the Accounts given us of those Times by Historians, and particularly by *Josephus*, answer to these *Predictions* with a surprizing Exactness, and afford us a full Demonstration that *Jesus* was a true Prophet.

But the chief Difficulty is in what follows—  
*Immediately after the Tribulation of those Days, &c.*—  
 This Passage also, as I suppose, relates more immediately to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the entire Subversion of the *Jewish Polity* both in Church and State. For, First, this Destruction has not before been particularly mentioned, but only the Investing of *Jerusalem*, and the Consternation, and Tribulation attending it. Secondly, all this is said to happen *immediately after the Tribulation of those Days* Matt. xxiv. 29.—*in those Days after that Tribulation* Mar. xiii. 24. <sup>1</sup> And

*the Prophet*, and by our *Saviour*, because they threatened, and portended the *Desolation of Jerusalem*. And it is very remarkable, that on the Appearance of the *Roman Armies* before the City, the *Christians* all retired, so that it is said there was not one of them left there, when the City was taken. See *Hammond, Whitby, Grotii Annot.*

<sup>1</sup> See Il. xiii. 10. xxiv. 23. xxxiv. 4. Joel. ii. 31. iii. 15.  
*Hammond, Whitby, Grotii Annot.*

this is said to be agreeable to the prophetical Style, which describes the Destruction of Nations, and particularly of the Jews, under the Image of the Sun, Moon, and Stars being *darkened*, &c; whether it be that Darkness, and Gloominess, fitly represent great Calamities; <sup>g</sup> or that the Heavens, and the Powers thereof, were proper Emblems of the Jewish State, and the Governors of it. But then, I apprehend, these strong Expressions carry a still farther Sense with them, and relate not only to the Destruction of Jerusalem, but to that of the whole World at the last Day, of which that Destruction was a Type. For they cannot be applied to the Destruction of Jerusalem, but in a very figurative Sense; nor is it easy to conceive why such a Figure should be so often used, both here, and in the Prophets, unless it were in Reference to some Event, when these Predictions should be fulfilled in a more proper and literal Sense. <sup>h</sup> Look back to the Prophets, and you will find in all the Places before cited Expressions, which cannot well be interpreted, but with Reference to the general Conflagration. In parti-

<sup>g</sup> See Dan. viii. 10.

<sup>h</sup> See Lowth on Is. xiii. 10.

Joel ii. 31, &c. We have a like Prophecy Rev. vi. 12. which, though some interpret it of other Events, yet in its full and proper Sense it must refer to the general Judgment, Comp. Heb. i. 11, 12. 2 Pet. iii. 10, &c. Rev. xx. 11. See Dr. Jackson's Works, B. I. Ch. 24.

cular the Passage cited from Joel ii. 31. seems to refer to some *Day* yet to come. In the third Chapter there seems to be a Prophecy of a Restoration of the *Jews* subsequent to the Preaching of the Gospel. When therefore it is there said—*The Sun and the Moon shall be darkened, and the Stars shall withdraw their shining*—what can this relate to, but to the final Consummation of all things? The same may be said of those other Expressions—*And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, &c.* This may also relate more immediately to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*: This was the first Act of kingly Power, that *Christ* exercised after his Ascension: It was accompanied with Prodigies in *Heaven*, and many plain Signs of God's peculiar Presence: There was a remarkable Distinction made between the *Christians*, and the *Jews*, in that Day of Vengeance. But, if we stop here, we shall, as I apprehend, fall very short of the full Meaning, and Emphasis, of these Words. The Phrase of *the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven* is borrowed from the Prophet <sup>1</sup>*Daniel*, and plainly relates there to his Coming at the End of the World, after the Dissolution of the *Fourth Monarchy*, when *the Judgment shall be set, and the Books opened*; when (as <sup>2</sup>*St. John* in a parallel Passage expresses it) *the Dead, small and great, shall stand before God*. The

<sup>1</sup> Ch. vii. 13. See *Mede*, B. iv. Ep. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xx. 12.

like

like Expressions are also used by our *Lord*, where he manifestly speaks of his coming to Judgment at the Last Day, as particularly Matt. xiii. 41. xvi. 27. xix. 28. xxvi. 64. And many of the Phrases used here are in <sup>1</sup> other Parts of Scripture applied to the General Judgment. St. *Luke* has expressed this still more plainly. Our *Saviour's Discourse*, as recorded there, manifestly points out some Time subsequent to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, some Time still to come.—<sup>m</sup> *They shall fall by the Edge of the Sword*, (says he) *and shall be led away Captive into all Nations*; *and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles*, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And again—<sup>n</sup> *When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your Heads; for your Redemption draweth nigh*. This cannot without great Force be applied to the Deliverance of the *Christians* at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*: They escaped indeed the common Calamity; but they enjoyed no great, or lasting Peace, or Prosperity. If they were hereby delivered from the Persecution of the *Jews*, they soon fell under as severe Persecutions from the *Heathens*. This *Redemption* therefore can be no other than the *Redemption*, and *Recompence of the Just*, at the General Judgment. The Exhortations also which follow, to Vigilance, and

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Rev. i. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Luk. xxi. 24.

<sup>n</sup> xxi. 28.

Attendance on our Duty, may be applied with much greater Propriety, and Force, if founded on Expectation of future Rewards, and Punishments, at the Last Day. The same may be said of the Parables of the *ten Virgins*, and of the *Talents* Matt. xxv. which are plainly a Continuation of the foregoing Discourse. They were doubtless designed to be of general Use, and to enforce on *Christians* of all Times the Necessity of a timely Repentance, of good Works, and a proper Employment of their several Gifts and Abilities ; and this in Consideration of a Judgment to come, the Certainty of which we know, but the Time we know not. What follows v. 31, &c. seems to be quite decisive. *The Son of Man* is there described in nearly the same Words as before Ch. xxiv. 30. as *coming in Glory, and all the holy Angels with him* : It is said, that *all Nations shall be gathered before him* ; and that he shall pass Judgment upon them according to their Neglect, or Performance of Acts of Charity ; and shall sentence the Wicked to *everlasting Punishment*, and bestow on the *Righteous Life eternal*. We have therefore in this Discourse of our *Saviour*, a most beautiful Instance of (what is not uncommon in *Scripture*) a Prophecy carrying with it a double Sense, and foretelling two different Events, subordinate to each other, the first typical of the second. It contains a full Answer to his *Disciples Question.*

He

He tells them as well when the Temple should be laid in Ruins, as when he should come in kingly Power, (though not in the Manner they expected), put an End to the *Mosaical Dispensation*, and bring on — *συντέλειαν τῆς αἰώνος*; and also what *Signs* should fore-run, and presignify this his *Coming*. And in this Sense it was very true, what he told them, that *that Generation should not pass away till all these things were fulfilled*. Many then living survived to see *all these things fulfilled*, in their more immediate and primary Sense, in the Sense of the Apostle's Question: But then he delivers this Prediction in such Terms, as at the same Time to presignify another more glorious Advent, when he shall take upon him the full Exercise of his kingly Power, and bring on in another more full and proper Sense — *τὴν συντέλειαν τῆς αἰώνος* — the *Consummation of all Ages, the End of the World*.

° *When Jesus had finished all these Sayings, he foretold also his own Death, that he should be betrayed, and crucified, in two Days Time, at this Feast of the Passover.* This must appear very strange to his Disciples; but every thing now began to conspire to bring about this great Event. ¶ *The Chief Priests, and Scribes, and Elders of the People,* who had before come to a Resolution of putting

° Matt. xxvi. 1, &c.    ¶ Matt. xxvi. 3, &c.    Mar. xiv. 1, &c.    Luk. xxii. 1, &c.    \* Joh. xi. 50.

*Jesus to Death*, were now assembled at the Palace of Caiaphas, who gave this Advice, in Consultation on this Subject. They were exceedingly exasperated at the severe Charge he had the Day before laid against them; and therefore they consulted together how they might take him by Subtilty and kill him: But still the same Difficulties, which had hitherto restrained them, lay in their Way. This publick Festival had brought Jesus to Jerusalem, where he now appeared, and taught publickly; and therefore this might seem a proper Opportunity to lay hold of him. But his Discourses, and Miracles, made such an Impression on the Multitude, that they dared not attempt it, lest there should be an Uproar among the People. They would fain have contrived some Means of taking him by Craft, but what Method to think of they knew not. They agreed therefore at last, that it was safer to defer it till after the Festival was over, in Hopes that some better Opportunity might then present itself.

\* But in this their Distress, they were relieved by the seasonable Arrival of Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve Apostles, who offered to betray him unto them. They gladly embraced his Offer, and covenanted with him for thirty Pieces of Silver. He was one

\* μὴ in τῷ ἡπτῷ — not in the Time of the Festival. \* Matt. xxvi. 14, &c. Mar. xiv. 10, &c. Luk. xxii. 3, &c.

† This was the Price of the Redemption of a Slave, according

of our Lord's constant Companions; and they did not doubt but that by his Means they should discover where he retired, and have an Opportunity of taking him alone, in the Absence of the Multitude, without any Noise or Disturbance. The Motives which probably induced this wicked Man to betray his Master, were such as usually prevail on Men of his Complexion: "He was a covetous Man, and a Thief: He was probably persuaded that Jesus was such a *Messiah*, as the Jews expected, and therefore might follow him in Hopes of Riches and Preferment; but he had hitherto reaped no such Advantages, and might grow impatient under the Delay. Jesus had of late discouraged all ambitious Views among his Disciples; nor did he seem disposed to make Use of the Opportunities, which so lately offered themselves, of setting himself up for a King. His Discourses were in a Style no way agreeable to this Man, and flattered not his Covetousness, or Ambition: When asked, *what should be the Sign of his Coming*, he foretold Tribulation and Destruction, and told them, that *the End was not yet*. *The Bag* too might probably begin to fail; \* and when,

ing to the Law of *Moses*, Exod. xxi. 32, and was equivalent to about 3l. 15s. od. Thus, as the Prophet expresses it, was it *a goodly Price that he was prised at of them*. Zech. xi. 13.

\* Joh. xii. 6.      \* Matt. xxvi. 6, &c.      Mar. xiv. 3, &c.  
Joh. xii. 3, &c.

on

on a late Occasion, he talked of filling it, he met with a Reproof from his Master. \* And it appears from this Story, as well as from the small Sum, for which *Judas* sold his Master, that our *Lord* was sufficiently poor. This Transaction is thought by some to be introduced here, by St. *Matthew*, and St. *Mark*, a little out of the Order of Time, as being what more particularly, and immediately disgusted this Traitor, and put him upon trying, whether he could not make a better Bargain, by applying to the *Chief Priests, and Scribes*: Their Conditions therefore, though mean, he thought fit to accept, being himself mean and poor; and from that Time he sought Opportunity to betray him. And it was not long before he met with a proper Opportunity of putting his Treason in Execution.

\* The first Day of unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover, now drew on, when *Jesus's Disciples* thought proper to put him in Mind of the approaching Festival, he (as it is probable) having made no Provision against it. He ordered two of his Disciples, *Peter and John*, to go into the City, where they would meet a Man bearing a Pitcher of Water. Him they were to follow; and

\* The 300 Pence, for which they hoped to sell this Ointment, does not amount to 10*l.* of our Money, and this these Disciples thought much.

\* Matt. xxvi. 17, &c. Mar. xiv. 12, &c. Luk. xxii. 7, &c.

wheresoever he should go in, they were to say to the good Man of the House, that their Master would keep the Passover at his House with his Disciples; and he would shew them a large upper Room, furnished and prepared. They went accordingly; and Things succeeding, as Jesus had told them, they made ready the Passover.

There is no small Difficulty in reconciling the different Accounts given by the Evangelists of this *Last Supper* of our Lord; and Commentators are very much divided upon this Article. To clear up this Matter, it will be necessary to enquire into the Nature, and Ceremonies of the Jewish Passover. \* The Passover was ordered to be killed on the fourteenth Day of the Month Abib; after which was to follow the Feast of unleavened Bread for seven Days: But, as the Jews began their Day at Sun-set, this fourteenth Day began on the Evening of what, in our Way of reckoning, is called the thirteenth. The first Part of this Day was taken up in removing all unleavened Bread out of their Houses, and in preparing, and making every thing ready for the Celebration of the Passover, which was killed towards the End of the fourteenth Day— בין הערבים — between the E-

\* Exod. xii. 3, &c. See Patrick Annot. Cudworth on the Lord's Supper. Hammond, Grotii Annot. Calmet App. Bibl. Toinard Harm.

Evenings. The Jews reckoned two Evenings, the first of which began when the Sun declined from its Noon-tide Point, and lasted till Sun-set; then began the second Evening, and lasted till Night. The Time between these Evenings was in the Afternoon; and accordingly, we are told by Jewish Writers, and particularly by <sup>a</sup> Josephus, that the Ceremony of killing the *Passover* began at the ninth Hour, (about our Three in the Afternoon), and lasted till the eleventh Hour. The *Passover* was properly a Sacrifice, as appears from Exod. xii. 27. xxiii. 18. xxxiv. 25. Numb. ix. 7, 13. Deut. xvi. 2, 5, 6. <sup>b</sup> And accordingly, all the Paschal Lambs were brought to the Tabernacle, or Temple, <sup>c</sup> and their Blood sprinkled on the Altar. After the *Passover* had been killed at the Temple, and the Blood sprinkled on the Altar, it was carried home, and eaten there that Evening with unleavened Bread. And from this Time began the *Feast of unleavened Bread*, which lasted seven Days. This is expressed, Exod. xii. 18. thus—*In the first Month, on the fourteenth Day of the Month, at Even, ye shall eat unleavened Bread, until the one and twentieth Day of the Month, at Even.* But Lev. xxiii. 5, 6.—*In the fourteenth Day of the first Month, at Even, is the Lord's Pass-*

<sup>a</sup> De Bell. Jud. Lib. vii. Cap. 17.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xvi. 6.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. xxx. 16. xxxv. 11.

over. And on the fifteenth Day of the same Month is the Feast of unleavened Bread. And so also Numb. xxviii. 16, 17. That is, the Feast of unleavened Bread commenced on the Evening, which concluded the fourteenth, and began the fifteenth Day of the Month; but, as they began to put Leaven out of their Houses on the fourteenth Day, this is also sometimes reckoned into the Days of unleavened Bread. Thus *Josephus* <sup>4</sup> in one Place reckons seven Days of unleavened Bread, <sup>5</sup> and in another eight. And here the Evangelists, speaking of the Day, in which our Lord eat his last Supper, call it the first Day of unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover, which was undoubtedly on the fourteenth Day. To compare then what the Evangelists have said with regard to this last Supper: The Feast of the Passover was now coming on — Τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν αἱρέμαν Matt. xxvi. 17. — τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν αἱρέμαν, ὅτε τὸ Πάσχα ἐθύον Mar. xiv. 12. but more exactly Luk. xxii. 7. — Ήλας δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν αἱρέμαν, ἐν ᾧ ἐδει πάσχει τὸ Πάσχα — The Evening was now drawing near, which began the fourteenth Day, on which the Passover was to be killed. This very Time (if I mistake not) <sup>6</sup> St. John calls — Πέρη <sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ant. Jud. Lib. iii. C. 10.      <sup>5</sup> Ibid. Lib. ii. C. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Joh. xiii. 1. That this Supper was the same as that mentioned Matt. xxvi. 20, &c. Mar. xiv. 17, &c. Luk. xxii. 14, &c. may probably be gathered from what is said to have passed there, the Discovery of *Judas*, his abrupt Departure, and  
the

ἱερῆς τὸν Πάσχα—Before the Feast of the Passover—it being his Design to shew, that this Supper was previous to the Paschal Supper. It was then, as I suppose, towards the Conclusion of the thirteenth Day, when our *Lord's Disciples* put him in Mind, that the Time of keeping the *Passover* drew nigh, and when he sent two of them to provide a Room for him. They went accordingly, and made ready *the Passover*; that is, they removed all Leaven, provided a Lamb, and made ready what was necessary for celebrating that Sacrifice the ensuing Day. In the Evening immediately following, that is, in the Evening, which began the fourteenth Day, *Jesus came with the Twelve, and sat down to Supper.*

\* Our *Lord*, being now shortly to depart out of this *World*, and knowing, and compassionating, the Weakness, and Prejudices of his Disciples, and how their Minds were set upon worldly Grandeur, was willing, before he left them, to shew his *Love* and Kindnes to them, by giving them a Lesson of Humility. Though now therefore *the Father had given all things into his Hands*; though *he came from God*, and was going now again to sit down on his Right Hand, in the *Glory which he had with*

the final Leave our *Lord* takes of him, v. 27; not to mention the Prophecy of Peter's Denial. \* Joh. xiii. 1, &c.

bim

him before the *World* was; yet he was content to condescend to the meanest Offices, in Order to set before them a Pattern of Humility. <sup>h</sup> *In the Middle of Supper he rose from Table, laid aside his upper Garment, took a Towel, and girded himself, after the Manner of a Servant,* <sup>i</sup> *and washed his Disciples' Feet.* St. Luke here remarks, that <sup>k</sup> *there had been a Strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest.* We find, Matt. xx. 20, &c. Mar. x. 35, &c. that there had been such a Contention among them a little before they came to *Jerusalem*, <sup>l</sup> and possibly they might have had some such Dispute since. And this seems to have been the Reason, and Occasion, of this Action of our *Saviour*. He was willing to correct their ambitious Thoughts, and both by his Example, and Precept, teach them not to expect Grandeur and Power in his Service. And it is observable, that as our *Lord* here in St. Luke, recommends Humility to his Apostles, almost in the same Words as we find in the above-cited Passages of St. Matthew, and St. Mark, so when he speaks of himself, he speaks here in the present Tense—*For whether is greater, he that sitteth at Meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at*

<sup>h</sup> τῇ διῆπερ γενομένῃ—during Supper, or possibly, when Supper was first brought to Table. <sup>i</sup> This was common at Entertainments, but usually performed by Servants. <sup>k</sup> ιγίνετο δὲ φιλοτεκνία ἡ αὐτῶν. Luk. xxii. 24, &c. <sup>l</sup> See Note, p. 250.

*Meat? but I am among you as he that serveth —* which Words seem to refer to some present Action, which can be no other than this of *washing his Disciples' Feet*, here recorded by St. John. But when our *Lord* came to *wash Peter's Feet*, Peter would not suffer him to perform so servile an Office to him. *Jesus answered him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.* The Meaning of which Words may be, that, though they had not yet learnt the Doctrine of Humility, and did not then know the Tendency of this Action, yet hereafter they would be better instructed. Or the Meaning may be only that soon after — *μετὰ ταῦτα* — he would teach them, what *they did not know at present*, the Design of this his Action, thereby referring to the Instructions he himself gives them, v. 12, &c. *Know ye what I have done to you, &c.* Peter still persisting in his Refusal, *Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no Part with me:* This zealous Disciple cried out, *Lord, not my Feet only, but also my Hands, and my Head:* *Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his Feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all.*<sup>m</sup> Our Saviour here, as was frequently his Custom, takes Occasion to convey spiritual Instruction under the Image of things occurring to our Senses — *If I*

<sup>m</sup> See *Hammond, Grotii Annot.*

wash thee not, thou hast no Part in me—If thou learnest not from me Purity of Heart, represented by this external *Washing*, and typified also by the Water of Baptism, thou canst have no Share in the Benefits of my Gospel. *He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his Feet.* This seems to be an Allusion to the Custom in the Baths, where those who had washed themselves, after they put on their Clothes, again washed their Feet, to cleanse them from such Defilement as they might in the mean while have contracted. And under this Image our Saviour would teach us, that those who have been baptized in his Faith, and washed away their Sins by Repentance, though they need not begin the Work of Repentance anew, yet they should take Care to cleanse themselves from such lesser Defilements, as they daily contracted. Our Lord, sitting down again to Table, explains to his Disciples the Meaning and Design of what he had done, and recommends to them the Practice of Humility in the most earnest and persuasive Terms—*Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your Feet; ye also ought to wash one another's Feet. For I have given you an Example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* He had

before told them, that *they were not all clean*; he now repeats the same — *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen*; but *that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel against me* — and he adds — *Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* Here he plainly enough, though yet in so covert a Way that *Judas* could lay no hold of it, tells them who he is, and by whose Authority he acted.

It was usual among the *Jews* to conclude their *Paschal Supper* with a Repast of Bread and Wine, which the Master of the Feast blessed, and distributed among the Guests, as a Token of their Thankfulness to *God*, and their Fellowship one with another.<sup>a</sup> *Jesus therefore, after Supper blessed Bread and Wine*, and distributed it among his Apostles, who sat at Meat with him, and commanded this Rite to be for ever observed by them in Lieu of the *Passover*, and in Commemoration of his Death. St. *Luke*, who gives the most circumstantial Account of this Institution, tells us, that our *Saviour said unto his Apostles — With Desire have*

<sup>a</sup> *Matt. xxvi. 20, &c. Mar. xiv. 17, &c. Luk. xxii. 14, &c. 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.*

*I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.* These Words have misled most of the Interpreters. We are told, at v. 13. that *the Disciples made ready the Passover*, and here we find our *Lord* expressing his *Desire to eat this Passover*; and from hence it has been concluded, with great Shew of Probability, that this *Supper* of our *Lord* was the *Paschal Feast*. But they have found it very difficult to reconcile this with <sup>o</sup> other Passages of St. *John*, which strongly imply that the *Jewish Passover* was the Night following. However it is not said expressly, that our *Lord* did keep the *Passover*, or that any *Paschal Lamb* was set before him. *Grotius* therefore, and *Hammond*, observe, that it was usual for such *Jews* as were by some unavoidable Accident hindered from coming up to *Jerusalem* to keep the *Passover*, to have in Lieu of it, at Home, a Repast of unleavened Bread, and bitter Herbs: And they imagine, that our *Lord*, knowing that he should by his Death be prevented from eating the *Passover* the next Day at the usual Time, kept such a *Feast* instead of it, and that this was what he here calls *this Passover*, and was *desirous to eat before he suffered*. <sup>p</sup> But why may not the Words *this Passover*, be supposed to relate to the *Bread and Wine*, which he was now going to consecrate?

<sup>o</sup> See Joh. xviii. 28.      xix. 14, 31.      <sup>p</sup> See *Toinard Harmon.*

This Sacraiment is supposed to have succeeded in the Room of the *Jewish Passover*; and St. *Luke* relates these Words of our *Saviour*, as immediately preceding the Institution of it. Take the Words in this Sense, and this Passage in St. *Luke* not only admits of an easy Interpretation itself, but also gives Light to a Passage in St. *Matthew*, and St. *Mark*, which, as it stands by itself, appears something difficult. Let us then suppose our *Lord* to lay his Hand on the Bread, and express himself in the Words of St. *Luke* — *With Desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer*. He was to *suffer* the next Day, and could not *eat the Passover* at the usual Time with his Disciples: He was therefore exceedingly desirous to keep this Feast in Lieu of it, and also to appoint, and institute this Rite, to be observed hereafter by his Disciples to the same End and Purpose, to set forth and commemorate his Death: And therefore, as I apprehend, he calls it *this Passover*; and in the Words following he gives the Reason why he was in Haste to celebrate it this Evening, because he should not live till the next — *For I say unto you, I will (or shall) not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God*. He should not live to eat the *Passover* at the usual Time, nor should he ever eat another *Passover* with them — *τως οτε πληρωθή τη βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ* — till the thing typified by the *Passover* was fulfilled, and really exhibited, in his Death,

Death, from whence was to commence *the Kingdom of God*, the Power of the *Messiah*. In the same Manner he took the Cup, and said, *I will not drink of the Fruit of the Vine* (in St. Matthew, this *Fruit of the Vine*) until *the Kingdom of God shall come*, (or, as St. Matthew and St. Mark have it), <sup>1</sup> until that Day, when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. His Meaning seems to be, that he should no more drink of this *Paschal Cup* with them, till the Times of the *Messiah*, the new Dispensation should come, under which his Disciples should be admitted to feast with him on a *new Passover*, and *new Paschal Cup*. According therefore to this Interpretation, the Sacrament <sup>1</sup> of the *Lord's Supper* is the *Christian Passover*, or rather the *Paschal Feast*. The *Paschal Lamb* was a Type of *Christ*; and every Ceremony relating to it prefigured some Circumstance of *Christ's Death*: It was first sacrificed in the Temple, and afterwards eaten by the People

<sup>2</sup> If we suppose *the Kingdom of God* to commence from *Christ's Resurrection*, he might really and literally partake with his Disciples of this Institution in this *Kingdom*. Possibly this may be the Meaning of what we read Luk. xxiv. 35.—*he was known of them in breaking of Bread*. He might consecrate Bread and Wine in the same Manner, as he did at this his last *Supper*, and this might open the Eyes of these Disciples, and enable them to recollect who he was. And in most of the Places of Scripture, where *breaking of Bread* is mentioned, the Context inclines us to interpret it of this Sacrament. See Acts ii. 42, 46. xx. 7. 1 Cor. x. 16. <sup>3</sup> See Cudworth on the *Lord's Supper*.

at Home, who thereby (as was usual in other Sacrifices) partook of the Sacrifice, and were Sharers of the Covenant thereby made. And thus <sup>w</sup> *Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us*; and he hath ordained *Bread* and *Wine* to represent *his Body broken*, and *his Blood shed for us* on the Cross: <sup>t</sup> And the partaking of these is called *the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, because by so doing we partake of the Sacrifice made by the offering up of his *Body and Blood*; become entitled to all the Benefits of the *Christian Covenant*, and oblige ourselves to all the Duties required on our Part. And this gives us an easy Sense of the Words of the Institution, and such as is entirely agreeable to the *Jewish Customs*, and *Ways of speaking*: *The Bread* is called *Christ's Body*, as *the Lamb* was called *the Passover*; and *the Cup*, or *Wine*, is called *his Blood of the New<sup>u</sup> Covenant*, or *the New Covenant in his Blood*; not because really changed into *his Body and Blood*, but because they represent *his Body and Blood*, and convey to the Partakers the Benefits of the Sacrifice of his Death, in the same Manner, as the *Paschal Feast*, and other Sacrificial Feasts, conveyed to those, who eat thereof, the Benefits of the Sacrifices. And thus we see <sup>v</sup> *the Lord's Supper* compared in this Respect both with the *Jewish*, and *Heathen Sacrifices*. In the same Sense therefore in which the *Israelites*, who

<sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. v. 7.    <sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. x. 16.    <sup>u</sup> διαδίκτην.    <sup>w</sup> 1 Cor. x. 16, &c.

*eat of the Sacrifices, were Partakers of the Altar, and the Gentiles, who eat of things sacrificed to Idols, had Fellowship with Devils; so is also the Cup of Blessing, which we bless, to us the Communion of the Blood of Christ, and the Bread, which we break, the Communion of the Body of Christ.* The Supper therefore, which our Saviour eat with his Disciples this Evening, which began the fourteenth Day of the Month, was not properly *the Paschal Supper.* He adopted indeed, and borrowed from thence, the Rite of blessing *Bread* and *Wine*, and commanded it to be observed by his Disciples, as a perpetual Memorial of his Death; but *the Paschal Lamb* he did not, and could not, eat that Evening. This was to be sacrificed the next Day, and to be eaten in the Evening following. \* Accordingly, we read that the next Day *the Jews would not go into the Judgment-Hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover:* <sup>v</sup> The same Day is called

\* Joh. xviii. 28. The learned *Bochart*, and Dr. *Lightfoot*, and others, who suppose that our Lord eat the *Paschal Lamb* before his Crucifixion, interpret this of the other Sacrifices which were offered during the Feast of unleavened *Bread*. These are indeed, in two or three Places of Scripture, called *Passover-Offerings*; but — τὸ Πάσχα — must I think denote, or at least include, the *Paschal Lamb* itself. Besides, if other Sacrifices were meant, the *Jews* must never have entered into the Judgment-Hall; for Sacrifices were offered in the Temple every Day.

<sup>v</sup> Joh. xix. 14, 31. The same learned Writers suppose the παρεστατον

also the Preparation of the Passover; and that Sabbath-Dey, which succeeded, is called an high Day, which particularly points out the first Day of the Feast of unleavened Bread, <sup>2</sup> in which there was an holy Convocation to the Lord, and in which they were commanded to do no Manner of Work. And it is observable, that according to the Account here given, Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us, and suffered Death on the same Day, and at the very same Hour, in which the Passover was sacrificed in the Temple. It is farther observable, that our Saviour rose from the Dead, and became the First-fruits of them that slept, on the Morrow after the first Day of unleavened Bread, <sup>3</sup> when the Sheaf of the First-

*παρσεύνη*, or Preparation of the Passover here mentioned, to be the Preparation of the Sabbath, which is therefore so called because it was in the Paschal Week. The Day indeed before the Feast of unleavened Bread, which happened this Year on the Sabbath, is called by the Evangelists—*παρσεύνη*—and—*προσώπωτος* Matt. xxvii. 62. Mar. xv. 42. Luk. xxiii. 54. Joh. xix. 31, 42. But in these Places express Mention is made of the Sabbath. We know that in the Law particular Directions are given about the Preparation to be made for the Passover the Day before; and we find that our Lord's Disciples did prepare for the Celebration of this Passover: And therefore I apprehend, that *παρσεύνη*, with the Genitive Case *τῆς Περιζές*, can signify no other than the Day before the Passover, when this Preparation was made.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xii. 16. This Day is also in Scripture called a Sabbath. See Lev. xxiii. 11, 15. <sup>3</sup> Lev. xxiii. 10, 11.

*Fruits was waved before the Lord.* <sup>b</sup> Lastly, his Entry into *Jerusalem* before this *Passover*, happened on the very Day in which the *Paschal Lamb* was taken up.

It is not easy, nor is it a Thing of any great Consequence, to range the several Facts, and Circumstances preceding our *Lord's Passion*, which are recorded by the *Evangelists*, in due Order of Time. We find different Circumstances related by different *Evangelists*, and none of them, as I suppose, have recorded all. St. *John* in particular, who wrote his *Gospel* purposely to supply the Omissions of the other three, has omitted most of the Circumstances and Speeches recorded by them, and added several, of which they have taken no Notice. It is no Wonder therefore that Harmonists should differ, and find it difficult to marshal each Fact, and Word, in its proper Order. It is not in particular easy to say, at what Point of Time the Discovery of *Judas* happened: It is not improbable, that this Discovery might be made by Degrees. <sup>c</sup> He had not long before told his Apostles, that *one of them was a Devil, or Informer.* <sup>d</sup> Now at Supper, when he *washed their Feet*, he told them *they were not all clean.* <sup>e</sup> Some Time after this he tells them, that *he that eateth Bread with*

<sup>b</sup> Compare Exod. xii. 3, with Joh. xii. 1, 12. <sup>c</sup> Joh. vi.  
70. <sup>d</sup> xiii. 11. <sup>e</sup> Ib. 18.

him had lift up his Heel against him.<sup>f</sup> And some Time after this we may suppose him to have told them still more plainly, that *one of the Twelve, who dipped with him in the Dish, should betray him.*  
 \* Lastly, we may suppose him after Supper to have specified this Person, by giving him a *Sop.* Or perhaps the different Relations may be disposed thus: *Jesus, having before hinted that one of them would lift up his Heel against him, being troubled in Spirit, at last tells them plainly, that one of them should betray him.* They looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake; and began every one of them to say unto him, *Lord, is it I?* He again said, *He that dippeth his Hand with me in the Dish, that is, one of you who sits now near me, and eats out of the same Mefs, the same shall betray me:* *Judas too, among the rest, asked whether he was the Person;* *Jesus, either in some Whisper, which the others did not hear, or by some private Sign, which he understood, signified to him that he was the Person.* *Peter, impatient to know the Person, beckoned to John, who was next to Jesus, and leaned on his Bosom, that he should ask who it should be, of whom he spake.*<sup>g</sup> *He, leaning down on his Breast, so as to apply to his Ear, asked him privately who it was.* *Jesus answered, He it is to whom I*

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxvi. 21, &c. Mar. xiv. 18, &c. Luk. xxii. 21, &c. Joh. xiii. 23, 24. <sup>g</sup> Joh. xiii. 25, &c. <sup>h</sup> immixtus in iis.

*I shall give a Sop; and he gave the Sop to Judas Iscariot.* Judas, thus finding himself discovered, thought it Time to hasten the Execution, and immediately left the Room. <sup>1</sup> *The Devil had before put it into his Heart to betray his Master;* and he had already two Days before this covenanted with the chief Priests, and only waited a fit Opportunity: But this Discovery alarmed, and enraged him: And therefore it is said, that *after the Sop Satan entered into him:* Satan now took full Possession of him, suggested to him, that this was the most favourable, the only fit Opportunity, and drove him on to the Execution of his wicked Designs. Jesus, as he was going out, said unto him, *That thou doest, do quickly.* But the Apostles did not understand him: Some imagined, that he only meant, that Judas should be speedy in buying what Things were necessary for the Celebration of the Passover the next Evening; others thought, that he meant, that he should give immediately what Jesus had ordered to the Poor. It may seem strange, that the Apostles should not understand what our Lord meant, after he had so particularly explained his Meaning. But this Discovery of the Traitor might be made in a Manner not discernible to all

<sup>1</sup> It is said, v. 2. of this Chapter — τὸ διαδοτὸς ἦδε βέληκότος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν Ἰudas, ἵνα αὐτὸν περαδῷ — *The Devil had already, before he took this Sop, or came to this Supper, put it into Judas's Heart to betray him.*

of them. *Judas* himself might sit near our *Saviour*, and the Answer might not, and seems not to have been overheard by the other Apostles; the Signal of delivering *the Sop* might be known only to *John*, or perhaps to *Peter*: Besides, all the Apostles were very slow in apprehending any thing relating to our *Lord's* Sufferings. If we suppose that he had evidently pointed out the Traitor to all of them, (which yet does not seem to have been the Case), yet they might not imagine the Hour to be so near, or have any Thoughts of their Master's being betrayed, and apprehended that very Night. He had indeed foretold it, but they were very unwilling to believe him.

\* As soon as *Judas* was gone out, *Jesus*, knowing that now the Plot was ripening, broke out into this Exclamation — *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him*; if *God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him*. He adds — *Little Children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say unto you*. Such Predictions as these, though probably little understood by them at present, yet, when they came to reflect on them afterwards, could not but convince them of his Prescience, and Knowledge of Men's Hearts. Our *Lord* concludes with re-

\* Joh. xiii. 31, &c.

commending,

commending, and enforcing the Duty of Love, and Charity, in the most powerful and affecting Manner. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

The Discourse also, which passed between our *Lord* and St. Peter, wherein our *Saviour* prophesied that St. Peter would deny him, is related by the *Evangelists* with some Variation. It is most probable that this Prophecy was repeated twice, once while they were at Table together, and a second Time in their Way to the *Mount of Olives*. Our *Lord* having told his Apostles, that *whither he went, they could not come*,<sup>1</sup> Simon Peter asked him, *Whither goest thou?* Jesus answered him, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*<sup>2</sup> He farther told him, that *Satan<sup>3</sup> had obtained Liberty to sift them as Wheat*, and that *he had prayed for him in particular, that his Faith might not fail*; and he admonished him to *turn, and strengthen his Brethren*. Peter, with more Zeal, than Prudence, or Humility, cried out, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I am ready to go with thee both into Prison, and to Death.* Jesus answered him, *Wilt thou lay down thy Life for my Sake? Verily,*

<sup>1</sup> Joh. xiii. 36, &c. <sup>2</sup> Luk. xxii. 31, &c. <sup>3</sup> ιτη. περιποιησις.

rily, verily, I say unto thee, the Cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Some Time after this, when they had left the Room, and were gone out into the Mount of Olives, our Lord again foretold, that not only Peter, but all his Apostles should that Night be offended because of him: Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this Night; for It is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep of the Flock shall be scattered abroad: But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter again, with his usual Zeal, protested, that though all should be offended, yet would not he. Our Lord rebuked this his vain Presumption, and foretold, that he should fall more shamefully than any of the rest: Verily I say unto thee, that this Day, even in this Night, before the Cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter protested more vehemently than ever, that if he should die with him, yet he would not deny him. Likewise also said they all.

¶ Our Lord, having foretold Peter's Denial of him, addresses himself to all the Apostles, and asks them, whether when he sent them without Purse, and Scrip, and Shoes, they lacked any thing; and they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a Purse, let him take it, and likewise his Scrip; and he that hath no Sword, let him sell his

• Matt. xxvi. 30, &c: Mar. xiv. 26, &c,  
35, &c.

¶ Luk. xxii.

*Garment,*

*Garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the Transgressors; for the Things concerning me have an End.* <sup>9</sup> Several ancient MSS. read v. 36. — πωλήσει, and ἀγοράσει — will sell, and will buy. If we retain the present Reading this will not alter the Sense, <sup>1</sup> it not being unusual in the prophetical Style, to foretel what will happen, in such particular Circumstances, under the Form of an Imperative. Our Saviour intended to forewarn them, that Times of great Distress were coming. It was usual for those who went a long Journey to take with them *a Purse or Scrip*, that they might not want Provisions, and to arm themselves with a *Sword*, to defend them against Robbers. <sup>2</sup> Our Saviour had before sent out his Disciples without *Purse or Scrip*, and they found ready Entertainment every where; and without a *Sword*, and no one hurt, or molested them. He would now forewarn them, that they must expect to meet with different Treatment: *He himself should be reckoned amongst the Transgressors*; and they must expect no better Usage than their Master. But they, taking his Words in a literal Sense, told him they had *two Swords*. Our Lord contented himself with a short Reply, and said unto them, *It is*

<sup>9</sup> See Millii Nov. Test. <sup>1</sup> Thus Jer. ix. 17. *Call ye for the Mourning-women*; that is, you will have occasion to call for them. <sup>2</sup> See Matt. x. 9, &c.

enough; as much as to say, You need not trouble yourselves any farther about providing Arms.

His Discourses in the 14th, 15th, and 16th Chapters of St. John, which seem to have followed immediately after, come in here very properly. They thought of providing for their Defence; he bids them to concern themselves no farther; and then gives them Exhortations proper to comfort them under their present Distress, and to prevent *their Heart* from being overwhelmed with *Trouble*. A due Attention to the present Situation and Circumstances of these Apostles, will best enable us to explain this Discourse of our *Lord*. We may suppose them full of Doubts, and Misgivings, and melancholy Apprehensions; alarmed, and confounded at our *Saviour's* Predictions, that he should be *betrayed, and crucified, and denied by Peter, and forsaken by them all*. These Exhortations therefore were designed to comfort them under their Distress, to support their Faith, and to take off their Thoughts from the Things of this World; but in such a Manner, *as they could bear*, as was best adapted to their Capacities, and Infirmities. They do not seem all of them to have been delivered at the same Time, in one continued Discourse: There seems to be a Break at the End of the fourteenth Chapter; and it is probable, that thus far might be spoken after Supper, before they left the Room: And what follows in the ensuing Chapters might be delivered in

in the Way as they went, some other Circumstances, recorded in the other *Evangelists*, first intervening. But as the Subject of these Exhortations is nearly the same, it may be proper to consider them all together.

<sup>1</sup> He begins his Speech with exhorting them *not to let their Heart be troubled*, but to put their Trust in God, and in him — πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε — *believe in God, believe also in me.* He tells them, that *in his Father's House were many Mansions, and Room for many Guests* — εἰ δὲ μὲν, εἴποις ἀν δικῆν· \* πορεύομαι ἐπαγάνται τόποις ἵνα — *If you could think there was not such Room, yet I have told you that I go to make and provide Room for you.* He had just before told them, that *he should be but a little while with them, and that whither he was going they could not come:* And therefore, lest this should fill them with Sorrow, he tells them, that *he was going only to prepare a Place for them; and that he should come again, and receive them unto himself, that where he was, there they might be also.* He adds, *Whither I go ye know, and the Way ye know.* The Disciples, who thought of nothing but temporal Grandeur, did not know what to make of such kind of Discourse: *Thomas therefore saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the Way?* Our Lord's Meaning, I suppose, was, that he was going into another World, as he had told them,

<sup>1</sup> Joh. xiv. 1, &c.

\* Some Copies read—*πιστεύομεν.*

and that by the Means of a painful and ignominious Death. But, knowing their Infirmities, he gives another Turn to his Discourse: He would not say any thing that was too shocking to them, and therefore does not tell them in direct Terms, that they must follow him through the same Sufferings, but contents himself with saying in general, that *he was the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, and that *no Man cometh unto the Father, but by him*, thereby giving them to understand, that the only Way to attain Happiness in his Kingdom, was by following his Precepts, and Example. He farther tells them, that, if *they had known him, they should have known his Father also*, that is, if they had sufficiently understood his Doctrine, *they would have known the Father*, and what he meant by *his House*; that by seeing him, and hearing his Doctrines, they had in Effect seen and known the Father himself. Philip, who knew that God had appeared to the Patriarchs of old, and who expected some visible Declaration of God in Favour of his Christ, *saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* Jesus, in his Answer, gives him to understand, that he was to expect no such Vision; that he ought to have understood him better, after *he had been so long Time with them*; that, by seeing him and his Works, they had in Effect seen the Father, and need not call for better Instruction, or stronger Conviction than he had already given them; that as he was intimately united with the Father, and acted by Commission

mission from him, so his *Doctrine*, and his *Works*, were *the Father's Doctrine*, and *Works*. Believe me that *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, or else believe me for the very *Work's sake*: You may believe me, on my Assertion, that *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, or, if you have any Doubt of this Truth, my Miracles may convince you. He farther assures them, that they themselves *shall do the same Works, and greater, because he was going to the Father*, and should be able to do any thing for them, and to obtain for them *whatsoever they should ask in his Name*. <sup>w</sup> The Reason why our *Lord* insists so much on the Necessity, and *Expediency* of his *going to the Father*, seems to be, to prevent their sinking into Despair, when they saw him taken from them; and the Advantages he points out are, that then his Mission should be more openly declared, and more fully attested, and a greater Number of Converts should be made, than could, for Reasons often already given, be done, while he continued on Earth. The miraculous Effusion of the *Holy Spirit* on the Day of *Pentecost* sufficiently verified what is here foretold. Our *Lord* proceeds to give his Disciples seasonable Admonitions, and Exhortations. *If ye love me* (says he) *keep my Commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another* <sup>x</sup> *Comforter, or Advocate, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth.* This *Advocate* was

<sup>w</sup> See xiv. 28. xvi. 7. <sup>x</sup> Παράκλητος.

not indeed to lead them to Conquest and Dominion; for *the World* (he tells them) *cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him*: He would not be obvious to the Senses, or Notice of *the World*: But he tells them, that *they should know him*, and enjoy the Comfort and Benefit of his Protection; for *he should dwell with them, and be in them*. *I will not leave you*<sup>y</sup> *comfortless, or destitute*; (says he) *I will come to you*. This may be supposed to relate either to his Appearance to them after his Resurrection, or to his Presence with them by his *Spirit*: And in either of these Senses, they might be said to *know at that Day, that he was in the Father, and they in him, and he in them*. He again inculcates Obedience to *his Commandments*; and tells them, that this would be the best Sign of their *Love* to him; and that on this Condition only *would his Father love them, and he would love them, and would manifest himself to them*. These Doctrines of our Lord seem to us sufficiently clear and plain; but to his Disciples, at that Time, they appeared very strange and unintelligible. Accordingly, one of them asked him, <sup>z</sup>*what could be the Reason that he should shew himself to them, and not to the World*. They expected some publick Manifestation of him, visible to all the World, and could not comprehend why he should talk of *shewing himself to them alone*.

<sup>y</sup> ἐφειδες.      <sup>z</sup> τι γίγνεται ὅτι,

Our Lord did not think proper to tell them at once, that he was no such *Messiah* as they looked for; but thought it sufficient to intimate this Doctrine in general Terms, such as they would better understand hereafter. *If a Man love me, (says he) he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my Sayings; and the Word, which you hear, is not mine, but the Father's, which sent me.* His Doctrine is this, that the Benefits conferred by him are spiritual, to be obtained only by *loving him, and keeping his Words;* and that to such only as shall thus *love him* is he to be manifested. The Words following will in some Measure explain why he spake not in plainer and fuller Terms—*These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you:* That is to say—Thus far is sufficient to say at present, while I continue in Person with you; I need not now explain myself any farther; all these things shall in due Time be more fully taught you by the *Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name;* he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. To the same Purpose also he speaks, Ch. xvi. 12.—*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* And again, v. 25.—*These things have I spoken unto you in Proverbs, &c.* We

see here the Reason why our *Lord* did not so fully explain himself to his Disciples. He conformed himself in some Measure to their Prejudices, and Infirmitiess, and taught them the spiritual Doctrines of the Gospel by gentle Degrees, as they were able to bear them. Such Doctrines, as he knew would be disagreeable, and offensive to them, he reserved to be afterwards taught by the *Holy Spirit*, when they should be better disposed, and prepared to receive them. Our *Lord* closes his Discourse with a Blessing — *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you.* But it is *Peace*, not Conquest, that he promises; *not such as the World giveth.* He again bids them *not be troubled, or afraid;* and tells them, that, *if they loved him, they would rejoice that he was going to the Father; for (says he) my Father is greater than I.* He acted here only in an inferior Capacity, as his *Father's Deputy, and Messenger.* And therefore his Return to his *Father* must contribute to his Advancement, and give him greater Power to protect, and reward his Disciples. *And now (says he) I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe;* What I now say may appear strange to you; but, when you see every thing come to pass, it will serve to confirm your Faith. He adds, that he has no Time to hold long Discourse with them; *for the Prince of this World, Satan, and his Agents, were now soon coming;* but he had nothing in him; he had nothing

to

lay to his Charge, and no Power over him. But to this he submitted, to convince *the World* that he loved his Father, and was ready to do, and suffer whatever he commanded him.

As our Lord ends this Discourse, saying, *Arise, let us go hence*, we may suppose that he now left the House, where they had supped, and that what follows in the ensuing Chapters, was spoken by him in the Way, as he went to *Gethsemane*.<sup>a</sup> He then resumed his Discourse, and began with comparing himself to a *Vine*, and his Disciples to the *Branches*. Some *Vine*, which they met with in their Way, might possibly give Occasion to this Comparison; or perhaps he might allude to what he had said not long before at the Institution of the *Sacrament*, when he called *the Wine his Blood*. The Design of this Comparison was to persuade his Apostles to continue in his Word, and Doctrine, and shew forth that they are his Disciples, by being fruitful in good Works. He would teach them, that it was not sufficient to call themselves by his Name, or profess themselves his Disciples; but that, if they expected any Benefit from his Service, they must bring forth much *Fruit*; *they must abide in him, and his Words must abide in them*. He seems to hint at the Fate of *Judas*, who was a *Branch* of this *Vine*, but was now cast forth, and must soon die, and wither away, and be cast into

<sup>a</sup> Joh. xv. 1, &c.

*the Fire.* <sup>b</sup> But they were now, after he was gone, all of them *clean*; yet still wanted farther Correction and Improvement: Nay, if they did not continue in his Word, they also must expect, like their Fellow-Disciple, to be *cast forth*, as useless and unfruitful. *So should they be his Disciples*; on this Condition, *should they continue in his Love*, and whatsoever they should ask, *should be done unto them*. He still farther presses and inculcates the Exhortation couched in this Comparison, calling on them to *keep his Commandments*, and particularly to *love one another*, as he had loved them. *Greater Love* (saith he) *bath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends*. *Ye are my Friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you, &c. Having thus signified that he should *lay down his Life* for them, he forewarns them, that they must expect no better Treatment than their Master; that *the World would hate and persecute them*; that *they would put them out of the Synagogues*; and that *whosoever killed them would think that he did God Service*, and <sup>c</sup> offered to him an acceptable Sacrifice. <sup>d</sup> And *these things*, he says, he forewarned them of, *that they should not be offended*, *that when the Time should come, they might remember that he had told them of them*, and not be surprised, or tempted to fall off. He adds — *These things I said*

<sup>b</sup> See Joh. xiii. 10.  
1, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Λατρεῖαν προσπίγεια.

Joh. xvi.

not unto you at the Beginning, because I was with you. Our Lord from the Beginning knew the Weakness of his Disciples; and therefore was at the first very sparing, and cautious of preaching such disagreeable Doctrines to them. He knew he should hereafter have Time to inform them of these Things; and, as his Death drew near, he opened them more fully, and clearly, to them. Such Doctrine still appeared very strange to them — *Because he said these things to them, Sorrow had filled their Heart.* He adds therefore, that what he had taught them was true, that his leaving them would be for their Benefit and Advantage, because that he should send the *Comforter*, or *Advocate*, to them. What follows is something difficult to be understood, as it relates to the Forms observed in the *Jewish* Courts of Judicature, with which at present we are not so perfectly acquainted. <sup>e</sup> The Account given by the best Commentators is briefly this — The *Holy Ghost* is here called — Παράκλητος — *an Advocate*: He was *Christ's Advocate* here on Earth, sent to plead his Cause against his Adversaries. <sup>f</sup> The Word — ἐλέγει — signifies to implead, or condemn, in a Court of Judicature: Our Lord therefore tells his Disciples, that this his *Advocate* should bring three Sorts of Actions against the *World* — περὶ ἀμαρτίας, καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης, καὶ περὶ πρίστεως. Περὶ ἀμαρτίας — of

<sup>e</sup> Hammond, Grotius, &c.  
Jam. ii. 9.

<sup>f</sup> See Joh. iii. 20. viii. 46.

*Sin* — was an Action concerning criminal Matters. Such an Action should the *Holy Ghost* bring against *the World*, or the unbelieving *Jews*, and by his miraculous Gifts set forth, and demonstrate the *Sin*, and Crime of those *Jews*, in *not believing on Christ*. Another Action he should bring against *the World* was — *περὶ δικαιοσύνης* — of *Righteousness*. This consisted in vindicating, and rewarding injured *Innocence*. His Resurrection, and Ascension into *Heaven*, which the *Holy Spirit* would bear Witness to, was a Vindication of his *Innocence*, and a Reward of his Sufferings here on *Earth*. A Third Action, which the *Holy Spirit* should bring against *the World*, and its *Ruler* the *Devil*, was — *περὶ ἀγίων* — of *Judgment*. This was an Action of private Injury between Man and Man, which by the *Mosaick Law* was punished by way of Retaliation, on him who did the Injury. As therefore the *Devil* by false Accusation had persecuted our *Saviour*, and put him to Death, so, by the coming of the *Holy Ghost*, was *Satan's Kingdom* destroyed, and this Mischief most remarkably and evidently returned upon him. And this Destruction of his Kingdom was a full and convincing Evidence of our *Lord's Divine Mission*.

\* Our *Saviour* again repeats what <sup>b</sup> he had said before, *A little while and ye shall not see me; and*

\* Joh. xvi. 16, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. xiii. 33.

again,

again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. This Doctrine seemed to the Apostles very unintelligible: They did not think proper, though they were desirous, to ask him, but privately whispered among themselves — *What is this that he saith unto us?* &c. Jesus knew their Thoughts, and explained himself to them. He tells them, that this his Departure would be at first Matter of Sorrow to them, but would afterwards add to their Joy, and that this Joy would be perpetual, *no Man would take it from them*; that his Presence would not be wanted, for his Father himself would give them whatsoever they should ask; that he had taught them often in a dark and figurative Way, such as they were able to bear, but that hereafter he should teach them all necessary things most plainly and fully. His Death and Resurrection, and the Coming of the Holy Ghost soon after, enlightened them, and made known unto them the Will and Design of his Father, what his Kingdom was to be, and by what Means it was to be brought about. He adds, *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World; again, I leave the World, and go to the Father.* This in great Measure satisfied the Apostles: They said unto him, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no Proverb, Parable, or ænigmatical Saying.* They now understood plainly, that their

τοποφορίας.      κ περιφέρεια.

*Lord*

Lord came forth from God, and that he was going again to him ; and they conceived Hopes, that he would soon come again from thence, to set up his Kingdom on Earth. And as Jesus had resolved their Doubts without any Application, and given them this full Satisfaction about what they were privately whispering among themselves, they from thence perceived, that he knew their most secret Transactions, and private Thoughts : And therefore they said, *Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any Man should ask thee ; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* But Jesus knew their Weakness ; he answered them, *Do ye now believe ? Behold, the Hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every Man to his own, and shall leave me alone ; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.* He adds, *These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace. In the World ye shall have Tribulation ; but be of good Cheer ; I have overcome the World.* This was, as we have all along observed, the great Design of this our Saviour's last Discourse, to keep their Hear~~s~~ from being troubled, or offended, and to give them Peace and Joy. At the same Time his own Sufferings and theirs are predicted, the Holy Spirit is promised, the Spiritual Nature of his Kingdom is hinted at, and they are exhorted to *love one another*, and to bring forth much *Fruit*, if they would continue in his *Word*, and be his *Disciples*. But these things, though taught

taught more openly, than he had hitherto thought proper to do, are yet still delivered in *Proverbs*, with some Obscurity, because *they could not bear them now*; and were reserved to be more plainly and fully taught by the *Holy Spirit*, after his Decease. And doubtless these his Discourses had their proper Effect on his Disciples: They did not indeed wholly dissipate their Fears, or keep up their Courage, when they saw their Master apprehended: *They all forsook him, and fled*, as he had foretold they would do. But yet these Exhortations might probably serve to keep them together, and give them some Hopes of Relief, though in what Manner it was to be brought about they could not so easily comprehend. And after his Resurrection, when they saw every thing happen just as he had foretold, it must greatly confirm and strengthen their Faith.

<sup>1</sup> Our *Lord* concludes his whole Discourse with a Prayer to his *Father*, which as it was designed to beg the divine Assistance to help their Weakness, so is it in itself, like the rest of his Discourse, well adapted to comfort and support them under the present Distress. I need not run through every Particular of it; I shall only observe, that he here in express and positive Terms declares, what he had never done to his Disciples before, <sup>m</sup> that he, *Jesus*, was the *Christ*, <sup>n</sup> and that he had *Glory with the*

<sup>1</sup> Joh. xvii. 1, &c.   <sup>m</sup> xvii. 3.   <sup>n</sup> xvii. 5.

*Father before the World was.* The Blessings also which he prays for are purely spiritual, eternal *Life*, the *Knowledge of the true God*, unity of Heart and Mind, Deliverance from *Evil*, *Sanctification*, an Admittance into the Place where he was going, and a *Vision of his Glory*.

° *Jesus*, having finished his Exhortations and his Prayers, continued walking on with his Disciples towards the Mount of Olives, and passing over the Brook Cedron, he came to a Place called Gethsemane, at the Foot of the Mountain, where he entered into a Garden, a Place where he had often retired in private with his Disciples. Here he left the rest of his Disciples, desiring them to stay, while he went and prayed at some Distance from them; and took with him only Peter, and James, and John. To these he imparted the *Sorrow*, and *Amazement* of Mind, which now overwhelmed him; and bade them tarry and watch with him. And going on a little farther, he was seized with great *Agonies* of Mind; and his Sweat was as it were great *Drops of Blood*, falling down to the Ground; and he prayed to God with great *Earnestness*, and at the same Time with great *Resignation* and *Submission*, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. This Prayer he repeated three Times with strong Crying, and Tears. His Fa-

\* Matt. xxvi. 36. &c. Mar. xiv. 32, &c. Luk. xxii. 39, &c. Joh. xviii. 1, 2.

ther heard him : and though he did not remove the Cup from him, sent an Angel from Heaven to strengthen, and support him. After each Time he returned to his three Disciples, and found them asleep. The Dangers which surrounded them, and their Lord's Predictions of his sufferings, which had been this Day so often repeated, had greatly affected, and alarmed them ; till at last their Spirits being exhausted with Sorrow, they were seized with a Drowsiness. Our Lord gave them a gentle Rebuke, and particularly addressed himself to Peter, who had so lately professed his Zeal, and Readiness to die for his Sake—*Simon, sleepest thou ? Couldest not thou watch one Hour ? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into Temptation. The Spirit truly is ready, but the Flesh is weak.* You may profess yourselves, and really may be, willing to die for my Sake ; but in the Day of Danger, you will find human Nature, without the divine Assistance, too weak to withstand the Temptation. After the third Time, he told them they might now sleep on, and take their Rest. The Hour was come ; and he was at Hand, who should betray him.

¶ Accordingly, while he yet spake, Judas appeared with a Band of Men, and Officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees. Jesus had often strangely made his Escape from them ; they therefore took

¶ Matt. xxvi. 47, &c. Mar. xiv. 43, &c. Luk. xxii. 47, &c. Joh. xviii. 3, &c.

most abundant Care to secure him. They had borrowed, or hired, a *Band* of Soldiers armed with *Swords and Staves*; they brought also *Lanterns and Torches*, though it was now Full Moon, lest he should lay hid in some dark place. They brought with them a Multitude; and some of the *Chief Priests and Elders* themselves seem to have accompanied them. When they were come to the Garden, where Jesus was, Judas, who went before the rest, stepped up to him, and saying, *Hail, Master, kissed him.* This was the *Token he had given them*, whereby they might distinguish him from the rest. Jesus presently let him know that he was not ignorant of his Design, saying, *Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss?* And, instead of endeavouring to flee, or betraying any Fear, he boldly advanced to meet his Enemies, and said unto them, *Whom seek ye?* They answered him, *Jesus of Nazareth.* He told them that he was the Person. But they were struck with a sudden Fear; and went backward, and fell to the Ground. However, recovering from their Fright, they again came forward; and Jesus again asked them, *Whom seek ye?* and they again said, *Jesus of Nazareth.* He answered, *I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their Way.* Then came they, and laid Hands on Jesus, and took him. Jesus answered with all Calmness, and Mildness, *Are ye come*

come out as against a Thief, with Swords and Staves for to take me ? I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no Hold on me. But this is your Hour, and the Power of Darkness ; and thus it must be, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled. His Disciples behaved not with the like Calmness. When they saw their Master apprehended, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the Sword ? And one of them, Peter, not staying for an Answer, drew his Sword, and smote a Servant of the High-Priest, whose Name was Malchus, and cut off his right ear. Jesus said to him, Put up thy Sword into the Sheath ; for all they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword. The Cup, which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels ? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled ? And turning to the Soldiers, he said, Suffer ye thus far, i. e. Bear so far with my Disciples Zeal ; we shall give you no farther Trouble. And he touched Malchus's Ear, and healed him. His Disciples, seeing no Remedy, all forsook him, and fled. And it is very remarkable, that these Officers and Soldiers, notwithstanding this imprudent Zeal of Peter, did not lay hold on him, or any of these Disciples, but suffered them all to escape, though they laid hold on a young Man, who probably came out of Bed to see what the Tumult was, with

nothing but a Linen Garment about him. But he left the Linen Cloth, and fled from them naked. But this happened according to our Lord's own Saying, *Of them, which thou gavest me, have I lost none.*

<sup>9</sup> Then the Band, and the Captain, and Officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away, first, to Annas, and from thence to Caiaphas the High Priest, at whose House the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and Elders were assembled in Council. This Council seems to have continued sitting till Morning. For it must be late at Night before Jesus was apprehended; some Time must be spent in bringing him first before Annas, and then before Caiaphas; some Time it must take up to examine Jesus, get together, and interrogate the Witnesses, and consult among themselves: And Jesus was still before this Council, when Peter denied him the third Time, which was at the second Cock-crowing, about Break of Day; and early in the Morning they led him before Pilate. They seem to have been earnest to hasten his Condemnation, and Execution, at this Time of the Feast, being the usual Time of executing Criminals, for Fear he might some way escape, or be rescued from them. For this Reason St. Luke, who mentions only the High-Priest's adjuring of our Saviour, says, that this Council was held *as soon as it was*

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xxvi. 57, &c., Mar. xiv. 53, &c. Luk. xxii. 54, &c. Joh. xviii. 12, &c.

*Day, and then proceeds to tell us how the whole Multitude arose, and led him unto Pilate; whereas St. Matthew, and St. Mark, deliver all that past before the Denial of St. Peter in one continued Narration; and add that, when the Morning was come, they took Counsel against Jesus to put him to Death. Or possibly there might be two Councils, one of such as could conveniently be got together, when Jesus was first apprehended, who continued their Examination till Break of Day; another more full and solemn Assembly, who met early in the Morning.*

*Jesus being brought before the Council, the High-Priest asked him of his Disciples, and of his Doctrine. He answered him, that he spake openly to the World; that he ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and that he had taught his Disciples no Doctrine privately, but what he had published openly; that there was therefore no Occasion to ask him; there were Witnesses enough of his Manner of preaching—<sup>τοι</sup>—these Persons present know what I have said. This Answer, as it was proper (no one being obliged to accuse himself) so was it prudent. He warily declines giving an Account of his Doctrine, and declaring his Pretensions: He neither owns, nor disowns himself to be the Mes-*

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxvi. 59, &c. Mar. xiv. 55, &c. Luk. xxii. 66, &c. Joh. xviii. 19, &c.

fiab. One of the Officers which stood by, being offended with this Speech, struck him with the Palm of his Hand, saying, *Answerest thou the High-Priest so?* Jesus very calmly answered him, *If I have spoken Evil, bear Witness of the Evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?* The Council then proceeded to enquire after, and examine Witnesses. But though many Witnesses appeared ready to bear Testimony against him, and not scrupling to bear false Testimony, and though the Chief Priests and all the Council sought for Witness against him to put him to Death, and laboured to get something out of their Evidence, which might amount to a capital Crime before the Roman Governor, yet they could find no such thing—*τοιαν αι μαρτυριαν οι θεοι*—says St. Mark—their Testimonies were not sufficient, equal, and full to the Purpose. At the last came two false Witnesses, and said, *This Fellow said, I am able to destroy (I will destroy, Mar.) the Temple of God, and to build it in three Days*—This was plainly perverting our Saviour's Words. He had said—<sup>1</sup> *Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up.* But these Witnesses represented him as saying, that he himself would destroy, or was able to destroy, the Temple. But still this false Evidence was not sufficient for their Purpose. The most it could amount to was an Offence against the Temple, an Instance of Presumption and Folly; but it could never be

<sup>1</sup> *Hammond, Grotius.*

<sup>1</sup> Joh. ii. 19.  
thought

thought by the *Roman Governor* a capital Offence. There cannot indeed be a greater Proof either of the Prudence our *Saviour* acted with throughout the whole Course of his Ministry, or of the Necessity he was under of acting thus warily, than the Perplexity, which this Council was under, and the Difficulty they found of obtaining Matter of Accusation against him. He still continued to act with the like Caution, *He answered nothing*; and when called upon by the *High-Priest* to make his Defence, he still held his *Peace*.

\* *The High-Priest*, finding he could extort no sufficient Matter of Accusation from any of his Witnesses, thought of another Method. *He adjured Jesus* himself to answer upon Oath, \* as it seems Judges had a power to do in capital Cases. \* It should seem by comparing St. *Luke* with the other *Evangelists*, that *the High-Priest* put two distinct Questions to our *Saviour*, though St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* for Brevity's sake contract them into one. They seem first to have asked him—*Art thou the Christ?* To this, (according to St. *Luke*), he declined giving a positive Answer, but said—*If I tell you, you will not believe—εἰπῶ τοὺς ἐγενόμενος—and if I should argue with you* (for so εργάζεται sometimes

\* Matt. xxvi. 63, &c. Mar. xiv. 61, &c. Luk. xxii. 66, &c.

\* See Lev. v. 1. 1 Kings viii. 31. *Grotius, Hammond, Whitby.*      \* See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 141, &c.

signifies) you will make me no Answer, nor will you release me. The Reason of our Lord's thus declining this Question might be, because this would have been to accuse himself, and that in such a Manner, as would have appeared criminal at Pilate's Tribunal. *Yō x̄istōs*—the Anointed—signifies a King; and the Romans knew that the Jews expected such a King, and would have been ready enough to have taken the Alarm, if Jesus had taken upon himself this Title. He therefore seems to have acted with his usual Caution, not expressly declaring that he was the Christ, but yet answering in such a Manner, as plainly implied it—*If I tell you, you will not believe.* And, as if this had not been plain enough, he adds, *Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the Right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Then said they all, *Art thou then the Son of God?* And he said unto them, *Ye say that I am* (according to St. Luke); or, *I am* (according to St. Mark). Here we see he expressly calls himself the Son of God; and also applies to himself <sup>z</sup> the Prophecy of Daniel, which the Jews all believed, and understood to be spoken of the Messiah. This was therefore plainly, to their Understanding, declaring himself the Christ, though not to the Understanding of the Roman Governor. Pilate would have thought himself concerned, if any one had

y See Matt. ii. 2, &c. Luk. xxiii. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Dan. vii. 13.

taken

taken upon himself the Title of *the Christ*, or *King of the Jews*; but one, who called himself *the Son of God*, and talked of *coming hereafter in the Clouds of Heaven*, could no way alarm him. If this Explication therefore be right, our *Lord* acted with the greatest Wisdom and Prudence. When *adjured by the High Priest* he could not refuse to answer; and he did give him a full and positive Answer, but yet such an one as could furnish them with no Pretence of accusing him as a Mover of Sedition. However, they were highly offended: *The High-Priest rent his Clothes, saying, He hath spoken Blasphemy; what farther Need have we of Witnesses?* They all joined with him, and condemned him to be guilty of Death. And consulting together, they agreed to carry him before *Pontius Pilate*, and on such Evidence as they had, charge him with Treason. He being thus condemned by the Council, as a Person deserving Death, he was looked upon, and treated, as an accursed and devoted Person: And therefore *the Servants*, and People about him, treated him with the vilest Abuses and Indignities.

\* St. Peter, though, when Jesus was apprehended, he *forsook him, and fled* with the rest of his *Disciples*, yet his Zeal, and Curiosity, prompted

\* Matt. xxvi. 69, &c.    Mar. xiv. 66, &c.    Luk. xxii. 54, &c.    Joh. xviii. 15, &c.    25, &c.

him

him to follow him afar off: And so did another Disciple, who being known unto the High-Priest was admitted, and procured Admission also for St. Peter. While Jesus was under Examination in the Room above, the Servants and Officers kindled a Fire beneath in the midst of the Hall, or Court-Yard.  
<sup>b</sup> Among these Peter sat down, and warmed himself. One of the Maid-servants of the High-Priest, looking earnestly upon him, took Knowledge of him, and charged him with being one of Jesus's Disciples: He denied it; and, to avoid being taken Notice of, withdrew <sup>c</sup> into the Porch, or Gate-way. And immediately the Cock crew. But here another Damsel discovered him, and said to them that stood by, This is one of them. Accordingly, one of the Company challenged him, saying, Thou art also of them. He then denied with an Oath, I do not know the Man. And he seems again to have returned into the Court-yard, to escape from this second Accuser. But some Time after he was again found out: Several now accused him; one in particular confidently affirmed that he was one of them, and added, that he was a Galilean, and that his Speech bewrayed him; another, a Servant of the High-Priest, and Kinsman to Malchus, whose Ear Peter cut off, said,

<sup>b</sup> οὗτος ἦν τῷ ἀυλῇ Matt.—ἦν τῷ ἀυλῇ κατὼ Mar. This whole Transaction will be better understood by consulting Dr. Shaw's Description of the Houses in the Levant. Travels, p. 273, &c.

<sup>c</sup> εἰς τὸ πυλῶνα Matt. οὗτος εἰς τὸ πρεσβύτερον Mar.

*Did not I see thee in the Garden with him?* This startled him, and now, being in the utmost Consternation, he began to curse and to swear, saying, *I know not the Man.* And while he yet spake, the Cock crew. Jesus, being probably now brought down from before the Council, turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the Word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, *Before the Cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* And he went out, and wept bitterly.

<sup>a</sup> *Judas* now, hearing that *Jesus was condemned to suffer Death*, was touched with Remorse for what he had done, and brought again the thirty Pieces of Silver to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying, *I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent Blood.* It is very remarkable, that we hear of no Accusation brought by this *Judas* against his Master. If *Jesus* had been guilty of any Imposture, if his Pretensions to Miracles had been a Fraud, and a Cheat, *Judas* must have been privy to this Fraud, and the same Motives, which induced him to betray his Master, would have prompted him also to discover his fraudulent Practices. But we do not find that he ever offered to make any such Discovery; nor did the *Jews*, who had him in their Power, compel, or urge him so to do. *They sought false Witness;* but they never examined any of his

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxvii. 3, &c. Acts i. 16, &c.

Disciples, nor made any Use even of him who betrayed him. On the contrary, we find this Man seized with Remorse, justifying his Master, and confessing his *Innocence*. His Conscience so smote him, that he returned *the Reward of his Iniquity*, and when *the Chief Priests* refused to receive it, *he cast down the Pieces of Silver in the Temple, and departed.* \* And being overcome with Grief and Remorse, he threw himself down a Precipice, and by the Fall *he burst asunder in the Midst, and all his Bowels gushed out.* And this his Repentance, and untimely Fate *was known unto all the Dwellers at Jerusalem.* Nor did *the Chief Priests and Elders* ever question, or urge him to a Confession, or even endeavour to ease his Conscience, or tell him he had done no more than what was right: No, having now obtained their End of him, as far as they could, they answer him contemptuously enough—*What is that to us? see thou to that.* However they took the *Silver Pieces*, and took *Counsel* what they should do with them. Though they made no Scruple of condemning *the innocent Blood*, yet they scrupled to put

\* The Word *ἀπνίξατο*, though it properly signifies to hang one's self, yet it is applied to any Kind of Strangulation, or Suffocation. This Suffocation of *Judas* might be the Effect of excessive Grief, or of his Fall. To be *suffocated*, and *burst asunder*, is no more than the natural Effect of a Fall from a high Precipice. See *Hammond, Grotii Annot. Pricæi Comment.* in Matt.

into the Treasury the Money which they had given for the Price of it: And therefore they thought proper to buy with it the Potter's Field to bury Strangers in. This Field was called by the People *Aceldama, or the Field of Blood*; and so continued a standing Monument of their Guilt, and our Lord's Innocence, to After-Ages. <sup>f</sup> And by these Means

<sup>f</sup> The Citation of this Prophecy in the Evangelist is attended with no small Difficulties. The Prophecy is cited from *Jeremiah*; but in that Prophet no such Prophecy is to be found. In *Zechariah*, Chap. xi. 13, there is such a Prophecy; but neither do the Words there perfectly agree with St. Matthew's Citation. There seems to be some Error in our Copies. Some suppose an Error to have crept very early into our Copies of St. Matthew, and *Jeremiah* to have been written by the Transcribers instead of *Zechariah*. Others say that the latter Chapters of *Zechariah* were really written by *Jeremiah*, and assign very probable Reasons for such Opinion. See *Hammond* on Heb. viii. 9. *Mede's Works*, p. 786, 833. *Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah*, P. II. p. 196, &c. As to the Prophecy itself, if in St. Matthew we read ἑδωκε for ἑδωκεν, (and that it should be read so, appears from what follows — Καὶ συνίταξις μοι Κύριος) the Citation will agree very nearly with the Original — וְאַקְחָה שֶׁלֶשִׁת הַכֹּסֶף וְאַשְׁלֵיךְ אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַיּוֹצֵר — — Καὶ ἔλασσος τὰ τριάκοντα ἀργυρίου, καὶ ἑδωκε ἀντὰ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν τὸν περιβόλιον. The Translation is literal, excepting only that — *היוצר* is rendered — *ἀγρὸν τὸν περιβόλιον* — and — *הוה* is omitted. The Words — τὸν τιμὴν, τὸν τετρακοντά, ὃν ἐτιμήσαντο ἀπὸ γένεως Ἰσραὴλ — and — καὶ συνίταξις μοι Κύριος — are added to supply the Sense, being taken in Sense, and very nearly in Words, from the former Part of the Verse. Let us then turn to the Prophet, and there we shall find *Jehovah, the Shepherd of Israel*, which

also a Prophecy concerning *Christ* was most remarkably fulfilled.

\* *The Chief Priests and Elders*, having condemned our *Lord*, as worthy of Death, but not having Power to execute their Sentence on him, hurry him away *early in the Morning to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor*. But they made a Scruple of entering into the *Prætorium*, or Governor's Hall, lest, by mixing with the Heathen Roman Soldiers, they should contract some legal Pollution, and thereby be rendered unfit to partake of *the Passover*, which was that Day to be sacrificed, and eaten. *Pilate therefore went out to them*, to hear what they had to say. They presented *Jesus* to him, and laid several Crimes to his Charge: They accused him as one who *perverted the Nation, and forbade to give Tribute to Cæsar*, saying, that he himself was the *Christ, the anointed King of the Jews*. But

is no other than *the Son of God*, threatening to *break his Covenant with his People*: He complains that *their Soul abhorred him*, and asks what *Price* they would value him at. In Answer it is said, that *they weighed for his Price thirty Pieces of Silver*, which was the *Price of a Slave*. See Exod. xxi. 32. *The Lord*, offended at the small Value they put upon him, commands the *Prophet* to cast it to the *Potter*, which he (in Vision, as I suppose) performed. To this Prediction the Event before us answers exactly. Our *Lord* is sold for *thirty Pieces of Silver* only, and that *Price given to the Potter*. See the Author on the Prophecies, &c. Note N°. 28.

\* Matt. xxvii. 1, &c. Mar. xv. 1, &c. Luk. xxiii. 1, &c. Joh. xviii. 28, &c.

they

they had no Proofs to produce of this their Charge; so that their whole Accusation seems to have ended in this—*If he were not a Malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.* All this while *Jesus* continued silent, and said not a Word to justify himself, or disprove their Charge. *Pilate asked him, Answerest thou nothing? Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? But Jesus yet answered nothing.* He knew that his Time was come; and he desired not to court the Favour of the Governor, or avoid the Sentence, which was to be passed upon him. Besides, his Innocence needed no Defence; he knew that his Judge, at the same Time that he condemned him, would pronounce him innocent. *Pilate however marvelled greatly:* He was much surprised to see so frivolous a Charge brought against a Man, and yet the Prisoner say nothing in his own Defence. But finding that their Accusation turned chiefly on Matters relating to their Religion, and particular Nations, he desired them to *take him, and judge him according to their Law.* But this would not answer their Ends: They told him therefore that he was worthy of Death, and that *they had no Power to put any Man to Death.* Pilate therefore took *Jesus* with him into his *Hall*, and there privately interrogated him about what he thought the only Matter of Consequence alledged against him, whether he pretended to be *King of the Jews.* *Jesus answered him,*

bim, Sayest thou this Thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Have you yourself any Reason to suspect me of Treason, or have others accused me of it to thee? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own Nation, and the Chief Priests, have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done? Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this World; if my Kingdom were of this World, <sup>then</sup> then would my Servants have fought that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my Kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness unto the Truth; every one that is of the Truth, beareth my Voice. Pilate, not understanding, or relishing, such Kind of Discourse, scornfully asked—What is Truth? We may observe here, that our Saviour, as before the Sanhedrim, when properly called upon, he declared without Reserve that he was the *Messiah*, but in such a Manner as they could not lay hold on, <sup>1</sup> so here he witnesseth the same good Confession before Pontius Pilate. He plainly declares himself to be the King of the Jews, and that he came into the World to publish, and bear Witness to this great Truth. But then he adds, that his Kingdom was not of this World, and therefore Pilate need not be alarmed, or of-

<sup>1</sup> οι ἐπίπεδοι ἀνθρώποι ήταν οὐτός.

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Tim. vi. 13.

fended at this his Declaration. And in Proof of this he urges, that he had never acted as those who aim at temporal Dominion: He had raised no Disturbance; his Followers had never appeared in Arms; nor had he made any Opposition, or stood in his own Defence, when arrested by *the Jews*. This Answer seems to have satisfied *Pilate*. He was now convinced of his Innocence, and saw plainly that he meant no Disturbance to his Government. His Appearance and Behaviour, the Want of Proof on the Side of his Accusers, the Notoriety of the Thing that no Tumults or Disturbances had been raised by him, and probably the Accounts which he might before have received of him, were sufficient to satisfy him that it was a false and frivolous Accusation, and that *out of Envy and Malice they had delivered him*. From this Time therefore he took no small Pains to release him: And to this he was moved both by the full Conviction of his Innocence, and by a Message sent to him by *his Wife*, who desired him *to have nothing to do with that just Man, for she had suffered many things that Day in a Dream because of him*. *He went out therefore again unto the Jews*, and told them that he could find in *him no Fault at all*. But *the Chief Priests and People* were so far from being satisfied with this Sentence, that they grew more fierce, and said, *He stirreth up the People, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee*

*Galilee to this Place.* What they designed was to exasperate Pilate, by suggesting, that, if there was no direct Proof of his claiming *regal Authority*, yet the Propagation of new *Doctrines* could not but fail of raising *Tumults* and *Disorders*, and therefore it concerned *Pilate* to take Notice of it.

\* But the mention of *Galilee* suggested to him an *Expedient*, whereby he might rid his *Hands* of his *Prisoner*. *When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's Jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that Time.* Possibly he was desirous to oblige *Herod* by this *Compliment*; and, if *Herod* should think fit to take him with him into *Galilee*, he should ease himself of this troublesome *Affair*.

<sup>1</sup> *Herod had heard long before of Jesus, and his Miracles, and had been desirous to see him. He was therefore exceeding glad, when he was brought before him, hoping to see some of his Miracles.* But he by no Means answered his Expectation. He saw a Man of mean Appearance, who was not at all disposed to gratify his Curiosity. He attempted no *Miracle*, and had nothing to say for himself. *He questioned with him in many Words, but he answered him nothing.* *The Chief Priests and Scribes vehemently accused him; but he made no Reply.*

\* Luk. xxiii. 6, &c.

<sup>1</sup> See Luk. ix. 7, &c.

Herod treated both him and his Accusers with Contempt. Finding their Accusations but ill supported, and nothing to fear from such a Person, he dismissed the Matter. *And him he set at nought,* and, in Mockery of his being called *King of the Jews,* he arrayed him in a gorgeous Robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And thus, by this mutual Compliment, these two great Persons, who had probably had some Disputes about their respective Rights, were reconciled.

<sup>m</sup> Herod having thus dismissed Jesus, and nothing appearing against him, Pilate thought he might now very reasonably release him. *He called together therefore the Chief Priests, and the Rulers, and the People, and said unto them, Ye have brought this Man unto me, as one that perverteth the People; and behold, I having examined him before you, have found no Fault in this Man, touching those things wherof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of Death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.* As the People had been so loud in their Clamours, he thought some Punishment might be necessary to satisfy them; and therefore he proposed to scourge Jesus, and so dismiss him. And, to make this the more easily complied with, he told the People,

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxvii. 15, &c. Mar. xv. 6, &c. Luk. xxiii. 13, &c. Joh. xviii. 39, 40. xix. 1, &c.

that it was a Custom that he should release unto them some one Prisoner at the Passover, and gave them their Choice, whether they would have Jesus, or one Barabbas. This Barabbas was a notorious Malefactor, who had made a Sedition in the City, and in that Sedition had committed Murder. Pilate hoped that they would rather permit him to release Jesus, than suffer a Murderer to escape. But the Chief Priests and Elders persuaded the Multitude, that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. Pilate, still willing to release Jesus, saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And he said unto them the third Time, Why, what Evil hath he done? I have found no Cause of Death in him, I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. But they were instant with loud Voices, Crucify him, crucify him. But Pilate would not yet give him up: He ordered him therefore to be scourged. And here again he was insulted, and contemptuously handled, by the Roman Soldiers. He suffered the most shameful Indignities, but such as (though in Mockery) proclaimed his royal Dignity. They put on him a purple Robe, and a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and a Reed in his Right Hand for a Sceptre; and they bowed the Knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews; and they spit upon him, and smote him both with the Reed, and with their Hands. And Pilate himself seems to have joined in this

this cruel Mockery. *He brought him forth to the People, arrayed in these Ensigns of Mock-majesty,* and told them that *he found no Fault in him*, at the same Time pointing to him, and saying—*Behold the Man*—whether by Way of Contempt, or to signify to them that he had been already severely enough handled. But they still persisted to demand his Death. *Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him*—as much as to say—*Do what you please with him, I will not be concerned in it*—*for I find no Fault in him.* *The Jews answered,* that, if he was not guilty of Treason, he was at least guilty of a capital Crime *by their Law, because he made himself the Son of God.* But this had a contrary Effect from what they intended. *Pilate* was hereby alarmed; as he was a wicked, so he was a timorous Man, and he was afraid, that, if *Jesus* was of divine Extraction, he should draw down Vengeance on his Head, by putting him to Death. <sup>n</sup> He again therefore took *Jesus* aside into his House, and examined him *whence he was.* *Jesus giving him no Answer, he said unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not, that I have Power to crucify thee, and have Power to release thee?*

<sup>n</sup> Or perhaps the Meaning may be, that *Pilate*, finding that they interested their Religion in this Cause, was the more afraid of exasperating them, being apprehensive of a Sedition, if he refused to comply with them. See *Lardner's Cred. of Gosp. Hist.* Vol. 1. p. 196.

*Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no Power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore be that delivered me unto thee hath the greater Sin.* The Passage is difficult. The Meaning seems to be, that *Pilate* had no Power over him as his Superior, but only by divine Permission; that he indeed sinned in condemning him, in whom he owned that *he found no Fault at all*, but that they who delivered him were far more guilty, who might and ought to have known his divine Authority and Original. *Pilate*, struck with this just Reproof, was very desirous to save him. But the People grew still more tumultuous: And the Chief Priests began to threaten him, and tell him, that, *if he let this Man go, he was not Cæsar's Friend.* He brought him forth therefore again to the People, and said to them, *Bebold your King.* But they again cried out, *Away with him, away with him, crucify him.* Pilate saith unto them, *Shall I crucify your King?* The Chief Priests, though in Contradiction to their own Principles, answered, *We have no King but Cæsar.* This at last prevailed. The Fear of a Mutiny, and the Danger of incurring the Charge of Disaffection to *Cæsar*, induced him to *deliver up Jesus to be crucified*, against the Convictions of his own Conscience. But he delivered him up at last with the utmost Reluctance. *He took Water, and washed his Hands before the Multitude, saying, I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person; see ye to it.* Then answered

*swered all the People, and said, His Blood be on us, and on our Children—an Imprecation afterwards most sadly fulfilled.*

And here let us pause, and take a short View of the Actors in this Tragedy. We have often already seen for what Reasons the Chief Priests and Elders persecuted our *Lord* with such bitterness and Rancour. Nor need we wonder that the People, who lately welcomed him with loud *Hosannahs*, should now so vehemently call for his *Crucifixion*. Had our *Lord* indeed after the Resurrection of *Lazarus*, and his own triumphant Entry into *Jerusalem*, given any Encouragement to the Populace, he might have set himself at the Head of a large Party; and of this his Enemies were greatly afraid. But this he carefully avoided; *he bid himself from them*. His Doctrines, and his Behaviour at *Jerusalem*, were such as rather tended to disgust, than encourage the Multitude. ° There had been always a *Division among the People because of him*. The *Chief Priests* and *Pharisees* were in high Estimation among them. His Apprehension, and Condemnation by the *Sanhedrim*, could not but have great Weight with the Multitude, whilst it struck his Disciples and Friends with Terror. He was arrested secretly in the Night; his Trial and Condemnation were purposely precipitated;

° See Joh. vii. 43.

and he was *early in the Morning* delivered into the Hands of the *Roman Soldiers*. His Followers had no Time to recollect themselves; many of them were probably in Doubt and Suspence, and all of them seized with Amazement and Confusion. Besides, the *Chief Priests*, and their *Officers*, took no small Pains to rouse, and exasperate the Mob. *They persuaded the Multitude*; and they themselves mixed with them, and joined in their Cries.

As to *Pilate*, we see in him a strange Mixture of Cruelty, Timorousness, and Remorse of Conscience: His Behaviour was throughout weak and inconsistent. One Time we find him unwilling to condemn the Innocent, and using all Efforts to save him; another Time insulting, and treating him with cruel Mockery; *bringing him forth in a purple Robe, with a Crown of Thorns, and saying, Behold the Man*; and afterwards jesting in the *Judgment Seat* — *Shall I crucify your King?* Desirous he was to release him; but the People must be gratified. To content them he delivers up *the holy one, and the just*, with the pitiful Shift of *washing his Hands before the Multitude*, as if Water could take out the Stains of Blood-guiltiness. The Convictions of his own Conscience, the Character he had heard of *Jesus*, and his Works, and probably too the *Dreams* of his *Wife*, might have no small Weight with him. The Title also, which our *Lord* took on him, of *the Son of God*, might alarm

alarm his Fears, lest he should call down the divine Vengeance on his Head. But he had his Fears too another Way: <sup>P</sup> He was a very obnoxious Person, had done many unjustifiable Things, and greatly provoked the Jewish Nation. He had also lately experienced how prone they were to mutiny, and greatly dreaded the Consequences of a *Tumult*: He knew also the suspicious Temper of the Emperor *Tiberius*, and was afraid of being accused before him of Disaffection, and want of Zeal for his Service. And thus, after a painful Conflict, the Fear of *Cæsar* prevailed over the Fear of *God*.

Let us in the last Place reflect on our Blessed Saviour's own Conduct, which we shall find to be entirely agreeable to what he had observed during the whole Course of his Ministry. We have now accompanied him from his Baptism to his Cross, and have discovered throughout one consistent and uniform Manner of Behaviour. To his Disciples we have seen him opening the great Truths of the Gospel by gentle Degrees, and declaring the spiritual Nature of his Kingdom, in such a Manner, and by such Steps, as might imperceptibly remove their Prejudices, without shocking them too roughly, or alienating their Affections. He made known to them his divine

<sup>P</sup> See *Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Lib. xviii. Cap. 4. Philo Jud. in Libro de Legatione ad Caium.*

Character, but with such Caution, as gave the Traitor no Handle of Accusation, nor the rest any Encouragement, or Opportunity, to raise Insurrections on his Account. The like Conduct he observed with Regard to the People, preaching the heavenly Doctrines of the Gospel, and frequently intimating his divine Mission, but in so prudent and cautious a Manner, as could give no Advantage to his Enemies, and no Encouragement to the hasty Multitude. Even to his Enemies he omitted no proper Opportunity of declaring who he was ; but yet he eluded their Rage, either by the Ambiguity of his Expressions, or by retiring out of their Reach. In his last Appearance at *Jerusalem*, he spake more boldly, and plainly ; but yet so prudent was his Behaviour, that his Enemies *could take no Hold of his Words*, nor find how they might accuse him. When brought before the *Sanhedrim*, he owned himself to be the *Christ* in such Terms as were intelligible to them, but such as they could make no Advantage of at *Pilate's Tribunal*. *He also witnessed the same good Confession before Pontius Pilate himself.* When first brought before him *he was dumb, and opened not his Mouth :* He was prepared to suffer, and took no Pains to avoid the Sentence, or make Advantage of the Want of Proof on the Side of his Accusers. But, when interrogated by *Pilate*, he freely owned himself to be the *King of the Jews* ; but at the same

Time

Time declared, that his Kingdom was not of this *World*, and was such as could give no Umbrage to the *Roman Government*. Thus he fulfilled his Ministry; and when his Hour was come, he suffered Death; but died not as a Malefactor, but with the strongest Attestations of his Innocence from *Pilate* himself, who condemned him.

<sup>4</sup> *Thus was he led, as a Lamb to the Slaughter.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Soldiers now took off the purple Robe from him, and put his own Clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. He went forth, bearing his Cross; but he being probably unable to support the Burthen, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, and on him they laid the Cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. There followed him a great Company of People, and of Women, which also bewailed and lamented him. He bade them weep not for him, but for themselves, and for their Children; and foretold the sad Destruction, that was shortly coming on their City and Country. When they were come to the Place of Execution, called Golgotha, <sup>6</sup> they gave him to drink, Wine, or Vinegar, with some bitter Ingredient in it, a Potion usually given to Persons crucified, either to stupify them, or to hasten their Death. He tasted of it; but refused to drink.* <sup>7</sup> *The sixth Hour now drew near,*

<sup>4</sup> If. liii. 7.   <sup>5</sup> Matt. xxvii. 31, &c.   Mar. xv. 20, &c.  
Luk. xxiii. 26, &c.   Joh. xix. 16, &c.   <sup>6</sup> See Hammond,  
*Grotii* Annot.

<sup>7</sup> There seems to be here an Inconsistency between the Account

when they crucified our Lord, and two Thieves with him ; the one on his right Hand, and the other on his left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Thus did he pray for his

count given by St. Mark, and that by St. John. St. Mark says, (Chap. xv. 25.), *It was the third Hour ; and they crucified him.* But St. John says, that it was *about the sixth Hour*, when *Pilate delivered him to be crucified.* In order to reconcile this seeming Contradiction, it has been shewn by Grotius, and other Commentators, that the *Jews*, besides the Division of the artificial Day into twelve lesser Hours, divided it also into four larger Hours, or Quarters, denominated from the Hour in which they began ; the first, the third, the sixth, and the ninth. These three last were their Hours of Prayer, and distinguished by the sound of a Trumpet. (See Cyprian De Oratione Dominicana, p. 153. Tertull. de Jejun. c. 10.). St. John therefore tells us, that our *Lord* stood before *Pilate about the sixth Hour*, that Hour then drawing nigh. He was immediately from thence carried to the Place of Execution ; and the third Hour was not yet quite expired, when he was fastened to the Cross : And therefore St. Mark says, *It was the third Hour ; and they crucified him.* It cannot indeed well be supposed, that all the Transactions previous to our *Lord's* Crucifixion, could have happened in less Time than this. Besides, St. Mark agrees with the other Evangelists, with regard to the Time of *Darkness over all the Land.* This, we may reasonably suppose, lasted the whole Time in which our *Saviour* hung on the Cross ; and this, they all agree, was *from the sixth Hour unto the ninth Hour.* St. Luke says it was *about the sixth Hour* — *περ διώρθησαντο* — v. 44. This is the same Expression as St. John uses : and, if you suppose it to relate to the Time at which our *Saviour* was fastened

Murderers. He took Care also of his Mother, in these his last Hours, recommending her to the Care of his beloved Disciple St. John, who from that Hour took her unto his own Home, her Husband

fastened to the Cross, (as the Words will very well bear), this agrees exactly with our Account.

Some suppose an Error in St. John's Copy, and that it should be read τείτη, instead of ἡετη; and some few MSS. do so read. I should willingly embrace this Solution of the Difficulty; but as this various Reading is scarcely sufficiently supported, so I think that the Transactions recorded by the several Evangelists, between our Lord's Arraignment before Pilate, and his Crucifixion, could not well pass in so short a Space of Time. The Jews indeed were eager to hasten his Death, but Pilate seems to have been in no Hurry. I should rather suspect an Error in St. Mark's Copy, though I cannot say that I have any Authority for it.

Others have supposed that St. John used the Roman Computation; who, they say, reckoned their Hours from Midnight, But against this the same Objection holds much stronger. If we admit this Solution, our Lord's Arraignment (which began not till after it was Day) must have been over by Six o'Clock in the Morning. Besides, if he was condemned at Six o'Clock, how came his Crucifixion to be delayed till Nine? It appears, I think, from Joh. xix. 16, that Pilate, when he condemned Jesus, delivered him immediately into the Hands of the Jews. After all, the Romans used the same Computation as the Jews, and reckoned their Hours from Sun-rising, as may be proved from numberless Instances.

Dr. Townson allows that the Romans used the same Computation as the Jews, but still holds that St. John reckoned the

Hours

Joseph being probably by this Time dead. In this distressed Condition he was mocked and insulted by all. *They that passed by reviled him, wagging their Heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the Tem-*

Hours from Midnight to Noon, using the Way of reckoning Time at *Ephesus*. But it is strange, that in speaking of a Person condemned to Death by a *Roman Governor* in *Judæa*, he should use a Computation neither *Jewish* nor *Roman*: And the Want of Time for the Transactions before our *Lord's* Condemnation by *Pilate*, and the Difficulty of filling up the Time between our *Lord's* Condemnation, (about the sixth Hour, according to St. *John*), and his Crucifixion, (at the third Hour, according to St. *Mark*), are Objections which still remain. The other Proofs, that St. *John* used this Way of reckoning, are not conclusive: As to the First, from *Job.* i. 38, 40. there is no Account that *Andrew* went in Search of others besides *Peter*: He went first in Search of him, and brought him; that is, before he came and abode with *Jesus*. The Tenth Hour therefore may very well be Four in the Afternoon. The second, from *Job.* iv. 6. may as easily be answered. As *Jesus* found the Woman of *Samaria* alone at the Well, it is more probable that it was not the usual Time of drawing Water, and might therefore well be Twelve o'Clock at Noon. In the third Instance from *Job.* iv. 52, 53. as the *Jewish* Day began at Sun-set, it might very well be the next Day before the Servants met the Nobleman on his Return: And as he importuned *Jesus* to come down immediately, and heal his Son, his Conference with *Jesus* was more probably at One at Noon, than at so late an Hour as Seven in the Evening. The other Proofs, from the Martyrdoms of *Polycarp* and *Pionius*, are merely conjectural, and the Computation of Time precarious.

But

*ple, and buildest it in three Days, save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross. Likewise also the Chief Priests mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot*

But to return to the Hour of our *Lord's* Crucifixion. It may suffice to say, that we cannot suppose either of the Evangelists to have been mistaken. St. John was present there. St. Mark is supposed to have written under the Direction of St. Peter, who was also on the Spot. We must then suppose, either that there is some Error in one of the Copies, or that they reckoned the Time differently. The Solution offered by *Grotius* and *Hammond* seems most reasonable.

Suppose we draw up the Circumstances of the Story in the following Manner. It is probable, that it was late at Night before our *Lord* was apprehended, and brought to the High-Priest's House; that the High Priest summoned an Assembly of the Elders, Chief Priests, and Scribes, to meet early in the Morning, *as soon as it was Day*. But he, and they that were with him, proceeded immediately to examine our *Lord*, and seek Witness against him sufficient to support a Charge against him before the *Roman Governor*, and put him to Death. In this Examination they seem to have spent the Night, or the greatest Part of it. It is said, that St. Peter was in the Court below, or without, and that our *Lord*, when he denied him the third Time, turned and looked upon him: This was at the Cock-crowing, or Three o'Clock after Midnight. Our *Lord* might now possibly be brought down from the Council-chamber into the Court; but they kept him in Hold till the Council met, which was *as soon as it was Day*. (That the Words—*απογεια εγινετο*—should mean Three o'Clock in the Morning, at the Time of the Equinox, and especially in that Latitude, and at that Time of the Year, when the Twilights are very short,

*save; if he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe him: He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God. The Soldiers also mocked him;* and, when he said, *I thirst,*

short, is surely a forced Construction). They had before endeavoured to find Evidence against him, but to no Purpose. And now, and not before, I suppose, the *High Priest* thought of the Expedient of adjuring him to tell them, whether he was the *Christ*, the Son of *God*: He answering in the Affirmative, they all condemned him to be guilty of Death; Then, as soon as might be, they carried him before *Pilate*. But this could not well be before Six o'Clock, (a Time still included in the Term *τριῶν*, in its technical Sense), nor would they probably have found him at Leisure to give them an Hearing sooner. His Examination before *Pilate*, and *Herod*, and the several Circumstances attending it, I suppose, took up till within less than Half an Hour of Noon: And therefore St. *John* says, that *it was about the sixth Hour*: The sixth Hour was then drawing on, and St. *John* might the more especially take Notice of it, as the sixth Hour was fully, or very nearly completed, when they fastened him to the Cross. All the Evangelists agree as to the Time of the Darkness: They all say, as was observed before, that it was from the sixth Hour unto the ninth Hour: And the Expression in St. *Luke* seems to intimate that it began soon after the fastening our *Lord* to the Cross—<sup>7</sup> *Η τέ τοι ἡμέρα ιερή*, (the same with the controverted Passage in St. *John*), *ἡ επόμενη ημέρα*, &c. What is here supposed seems to reconcile the different Accounts, given by the several Evangelists, of the Circumstances relating to our *Lord's* Arraignment and Crucifixion, and to allow reasonable Time for the several Transactions.

*offered*

offered him Vinegar to drink. One of the Malefactors also, which were crucified with him, railed on him, saying, *If thou be the Christ, save thyself, and us.* But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation?* And we indeed justly; for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.* And Jesus said unto him, *Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in "Paradise.* And about the ninth Hour Jesus in the Bitterness of his Soul cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And soon after he cried out again with a loud Voice, *It is finished: Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* And having said thus, he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost.

His Death was attended with the strongest Attestations of his Divine Mission. Pilate himself (though perhaps in Scorn and Mockery, yet doubt-

<sup>a</sup> *Paradise*, among the *Jews*, and also among the first *Christians*, was supposed to be a Place of Bliss, to which the Souls of good Men departed after this Life, where they continued till the Day of Judgment. (See *Targ.* on *Cant.* iv. 12. *Ter-tull.* adv. *Gentes* c. 47. *Quæst. & Resp.* ad *Orthodox.* apud *Fus.* *Mart.* Q. 75, 76.). St. *Paul* also speaks of *Paradise* as a Place of Bliss, 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. When therefore our *Lord* told this *Thief*, that he should *that Day be with him in Paradise*, he must mean that his Soul would immediately be in a State of Bliss. See *Grotii Annot.* *Bp. Bull Sermon on Acts* i. 25.

les by the Interposition of the Divine Providence) asserted his Title, putting *a Superscription over his Head — This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.* And though *the Chief Priests* took Notice of this, and were desirous to have it altered, he would not comply, but *answered sternly, What I have written, I have written.* There was also an extraordinary and supernatural *Darkness over the whole Land, from the sixth Hour unto the ninth Hour;* from the Time he was fastened to the Cross, to the Time of of his Death ; and this at the Time of the Full Moon, when no natural Eclipse of the Sun could happen. When he died, *the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain, from the Top to the Bottom, and the Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent ; and the Graves were opened, and many Bodies of Saints, which slept, arose.* The Manner of his Death also was extraordinary. Persons, who were crucified, usually continued alive for a long Time, for some Days ; and did not expire till their Spirits and Strength were quite exhausted : And accordingly, they found it necessary to *break the Legs of the Malefactors, who were crucified with him,* in order to hasten their Death. But *Jesus gave up the Ghost within three Hours after he was fastened to the Cross, when he was yet in his full Strength, crying with a loud Voice, It is finished.* These extraordinary Circumstances astonished all the People that came together to that Sight ; who, beholding the Things which were done, smote their Breasts,

Breasts, and returned. And even the Centurion and Roman Soldiers were alarmed: *When they saw the Earthquake, and those things which were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.* These Romans had probably heard, that Jesus was accused of taking on himself the Title of the Son of God: When therefore they saw his Death attended with such Miracles, they concluded that he was some extraordinary Person, though possibly they might have no distinct Idea of the Meaning of this Title of the Son of God.

All Circumstances also so happened, as exactly to accord with the Predictions of the Prophets. We have already seen how the Time, and other Circumstances of our Saviour's Passion, answered to those of the Sacrifice of the Passover. \* *The two Malefactors crucified with him, \* the Vinegar offered him to drink, \* the Soldiers parting his Raiment among them, and casting Lots for his Vesture, ^ the Body being taken down whole from the Cross without breaking a Bone, ^ the piercing his Side, were all so many Particulars, as were foretold, or alluded to, in the Old Testament.* And not only our Lord himself cried out

\* Is. liii. 12.

\* Psal. Ixix. 21.

^ Psal. xxii. 18.

^ Exod. xii. 46.

^ Zech. xii. 10. St. John seems here particularly to insist on this Point, either to shew the Reality of his Death, and the Agreement of every Circumstance with the Predictions of the Prophets, or perhaps to shew in Opposition to some Hereticks

in the Words of the *Psalmist* — <sup>b</sup> *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But the Chief Priests also and Scribes mocked him, according to the Prediction, and in the Words of the same *Psalm*—*He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.*

I have no Occasion to pursue our *Saviour's History* any farther. The Evidence of his Resurrection has been by many eminent Writers lately set in the fullest Light, <sup>c</sup> and the Accounts given of it by of those Times, that it was the Man *Jesus*, who really suffered, and not some Phantom in his stead. <sup>b</sup> *Psal. xxii. 1, 8.*

<sup>c</sup> See Mr. *Weß's Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

After writing the above, the Author drew up an Harmony of the Resurrection with a Comment, in which he for the most Part follows Mr. *Weß*, but thinks it unnecessary to suppose, that St. *Peter* went to the Sepulchre a second Time. It appears to have been occasioned by the publication of a late Harmony, which attempts to set aside Mr. *Weß's Account*. That the Women went in different Companies, is argued from the Silence of St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, as to any Attendants on the two *Maries* and *Salome*; and from the very different Accounts given by St. *Luke*, both of the Appearance, and of the Words of the Angels; which cannot without Force be understood to be the same with those related by St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*. The supposing them to have gone in different Companies is natural, and neither inconsistent with the Words of the Evangelists, nor with their Manner of writing. That *Mary Magdalene* could not have been present at the first Appearance of Angels, is manifest from her Words recorded in St. *John*: It cannot be supposed that

the Evangelists reconciled, and the several Facts ranged in their proper Order by a masterly Hand. I shall only observe, that from the Account we have

that he should pass over in Silence the most material Circumstance, and relate that which was trifling in Comparison : And her Words also imply an Ignorance that our *Lord* was risen. The Author sums up his Argument in the following Manner.

" I know that Harmonists have attempted to reconcile these  
" different Relations : I would not undervalue their Labours,  
" nor would I say peremptorily that none of their Solutions  
" can be admitted : All I pretend to say is, that the Sup-  
" positions here made, seem to me to give us the most easy  
" and natural Solution of the chief Difficulties. Thus then  
" I would arrange the Circumstances attending our *Lord's*  
" Resurrection. The Women who were present at his Cru-  
" cifixion, and saw him laid in the Sepulchre, prepared Spices  
" and Ointments to embalm his Body, and made an Appoint-  
" ment to meet early in the Morning, on the first Day of  
" the Week, for that Purpose. One of these, *Mary Magda-*  
" *lene*, more zealous than the rest, rose up early when it  
" was yet Dark. She calling on *Mary*, the Mother of *James*  
" and *Salome*, they went together to take a View of the Se-  
" pulchre (as is related by St. *John*, St. *Matthew*, and St.  
" *Mark*) : But before they arrived there, an Angel descended  
" from Heaven in an Hurricane, and rolled back the Stone  
" from the Door of the Sepulchre : And the Sepulchre being  
" now open, our *Lord* arose. The Earthquake, and Appear-  
" ance of the Angel, terrified the Keepers, and drove them  
" from their Station (as related by St. *Matthew*). After they  
" were gone, came the three Women. Their great Concern  
" was how to get the Stone rolled away from the Door of the  
" Sepulchre ; and this probably was their Reason for coming

given of our Saviour's Conduct during his Ministry, we may easily discover a plain Reason, why after his Resurrection he appeared *not* openly to all

" so early (as related by St. *Mark*). But when they drew  
" near to the Sepulchre, they saw to their great Surprise, the  
" Stone taken away: On this, *Mary Magdalene*, concluding  
" the Body was taken away, hastened to inform St. *Peter* and  
" St. *John* of it (as related by St. *John* and St. *Mark*). The  
" other two Women went on to the Sepulchre, where they  
" arrived at or near Sun-rising, and entering in, they saw an  
" Angel sitting, who informed them that *Jesus* was risen; in  
" Proof of which he shewed them the Place empty where he  
" was laid: They departed quickly, with Fear and great  
" Joy, to bring his Disciples word (as related by St. *Matthew*  
" and St. *Mark*). These being gone, *Mary Magdalene* came  
" back to the Sepulchre with St. *Peter* and St. *John*: These  
" also going in, saw the Sepulchre empty, and the Linen  
" Clothes lying by themselves (as related by St. *John* and  
" St. *Luke*). The Disciples returned Home; but *Mary* stayed  
" behind, and stooping down, and looking into the Sepulchre,  
" she saw two Angels in White, and turning back, she saw  
" *Jesus* himself, who bade her go and tell his Brethren, what  
" she had seen and heard (as related by St. *John* and St.  
" *Mark*). Soon after he appeared to the other *Mary* and *Sa-*  
" *lome*, and bade them also tell the Disciples (as related by  
" St. *Matthew*). These three Women having all left the  
" Sepulchre, (and their Stay there could be but short), soon  
" after came the whole Body of Women, early in the Morn-  
" ing, not long, I suppose, after Sun-rising, bringing Spices to  
" anoint the Body (as related at large by St. *Luke*). And  
" thus, between all the four Evangelists, we have a full and  
" satisfactory Account of the first Discovery of our Lord's  
" Resurrection,

the People, but only to some chosen Witnesses. The same Prejudices still subsisted ; nor were his Disciples themselves yet free from them. We find these Thoughts still uppermost in their Minds, even after our Lord's Resurrection. <sup>a</sup> *We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel* — was the Language of the two Disciples, who were going to Emmaus. <sup>c</sup> And just before his Ascension, his Apostles themselves all joined in asking him — *Lord, wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* What then may we imagine would have been the Consequence, had our Saviour appeared openly to *all the People*, or to *the Chief Priests and Rulers*? It would in all Probability have occasioned (what he had been all his Life-time so carefully and so wisely avoiding) a popular Insurrection. The People, who had before been ready to *take him by Force, and make him a King*, and who had so lately conducted him in Triumph into Jerusalem, would probably by such a stu-

“ Resurrection to the Women, and the several Circumstances  
“ relating to it; and their different Accounts mutually con-  
“ firm and illustrate each other. St. Luke adds a short Ac-  
“ count of St. Peter’s going to the Sepulchre; but this might  
“ be before the last Visit of the Women, though related after  
“ it. St. Luke, after he had told us how the Women found  
“ the Sepulchre open, and the Body gone, might think pro-  
“ per to add, that other Disciples, St. Peter in particular,  
“ were Witnesses of the same. That more than one Disciple  
“ went to the Sepulchre, St. Luke tells us v. 24.”

<sup>a</sup> Luk. xxiv. 21.    <sup>c</sup> Acts i. 6.

pendous Miracle have been still more firmly persuaded, that this was he who was to *redeem Israel*, and re-instate them in temporal Power and Dominion : They would immediately have taken Arms ; and his own Disciples would have been the first to head the Commotion. But what may we probably suppose would have been the Effect of such an Appearance on the *Chief Priests and Rulers* ? Would they have been all immediately convinced, and become his Disciples ? I fear not. <sup>f</sup> They had the Evidence of their own Guards, that the Sepulchre was opened in a miraculous Manner ; <sup>g</sup> they afterwards saw great *Miracles* wrought by the Apostles, such as *they could not deny*, or question ; and yet they still remained incredulous. They had before seen many Miracles wrought by our *Saviour* himself. He had lately raised *Lazarus* from the Dead, who appeared openly after he was raised. But what Effect had this upon them ? <sup>h</sup> They gathered a Council, and said, *What do we ? For this Man doeth many Miracles.* If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him ; and the Romans shall come and take away both our Place and Nation. And accordingly, they consulted to put both *Jesus*, <sup>i</sup> and also *Lazarus* himself to Death. We may therefore reasonably conclude, that if our *Saviour* had appeared

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxviii. 11, &c. <sup>g</sup> Acts iv. 16. <sup>h</sup> Joh. xi. 47, &c.  
<sup>i</sup> Joh. xii. 10.

openly

openly, this would only have exposed him to fresh Insults. These *Chief Priests, and Rulers*, instead of being convinced, would probably have been only the more enraged; and *Caiaphas* might have urged them to put him, if possible, to a second Death, rather than *the whole Nation should perish*, or they be deprived of their Credit and Authority. But let us suppose these *Chief Priests and Rulers* had been, by so astonishing a Miracle, all convinced that *Jesus* was the *Christ*. Yet they laboured under the same Prejudices as the rest of the People did. Had they thought that *Jesus* was the *Messias*, they would have thought that he was their *King*; and would have been ready to take up Arms in his Favour. This would have made the Insurrection general, and would have united all the *Jews* in a War against the *Romans*. And what would have been the Consequence of this? Would the *Romans* too have been all converted? No, surely; they would probably have suspected it to be a national Contrivance, a Conspiracy to shake off their Yoke; and instead of enquiring into the Truth of the Fact, or the Design of *Christ's* Mission, would have been hereby provoked to maintain their own Authority, and extirpate these rebellious *Jews*. I might add, that, to us in these Times, such a national Testimony would have appeared far more suspicious, and been liable to much stronger Objections, than the Evidence of the Apostles, as it stands upon the present  
Footing.

Footing. Wisely therefore, and consistently with the whole Tenor of his Conduct, did our *Saviour* act, in appearing after his Resurrection only to some *chosen Witnesses*. By withdrawing himself from publick View he effectually prevented any Insurrections, or Disturbances, and avoided giving any Offence to the Government, while at the same Time he appeared to proper and sufficient Witnesses. He chose out Persons of Integrity and Truth, whose Circumstances were such, as acquitted them of any Suspicion of contriving such an Imposture, and whose Lives and Deaths bore strong Attestation to their Veracity. \* And to these he gave *infallible Proofs* of the Truth of his Resurrection, *being seen of them forty Days, and speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* <sup>1</sup> With these he freely conversed, offered himself to the Cognizance of their Senses, and eat and drank with them after he rose from the Dead. <sup>m</sup> To these he freely declared himself to be the *Christ*, opening their Understanding, and expounding to them in all the *Scriptures* the Things concerning himself. But yet even to these he seems to have appeared with some Reserve. While they continued at *Jerusalem*, he was seen of them but seldom. <sup>n</sup> We

\* Acts i. 3.      <sup>1</sup> Luk. xxiv. 39, &c.      Joh. xx. 19, &c.  
 Acts x. 41.      <sup>m</sup> Matt. xxviii. 18, &c.      Luk. xxiv. 25,  
 &c. 44, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Joh. xx. 19. Indeed I doubt much whether this second Appearance to his Apostles was not in *Galilee*. St. John names  
 no

do not find that he made any more than two short Visits to his *Apostles*, and those at the Distance of a Week from each other. <sup>o</sup> But he commanded them to go into *Galilee*, and promised to meet them there. Here they could meet with less Suspicion, and he could appear to them with less Danger. And here he seems to have conversed with them more freely, and frequently, *speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*. But yet even here he does not seem to have taken up his constant Abode with them. He appeared to them often enough to satisfy all their Doubts, and give them full Conviction of the Truth of his Resurrection; but in such a Manner, as to give no Opportunity, or Occasion, to any Tumults, or Disturbances.

It has been observed before, and well deserves our Observation, that, after our *Lord's Ascension*, his Apostles acted in a quite different Manner from their Master. They immediately threw aside all Reserve, and boldly and publickly declared, that *Jesus* was the *Christ*. St. Peter, in his first Discourse to the *Jews*, thus plainly expresses himself--<sup>p</sup> *Let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both*

no Place; and it should seem strange that our *Lord* should continue a whole Week at Jerusalem, and never be seen by his Apostles. See also Matt. xxviii. 7, 9.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xxviii. 7, 10, 16. Mar. xvi. 7. <sup>p</sup> Acts ii. 36.

*Lord*

*Lord and Christ.* <sup>¶</sup> And again, when he was questioned about the miraculous Cure of the lame Man, he answered with great Boldness—Be it known unto you all, and to all the People of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the Dead, even by him doth this Man stand here before you whole. The same Openness of Speech he and all the other Apostles retained in all their Discourses and Writings, <sup>¶</sup> testifying, both to the Jews and Greeks, that Jesus was Christ, <sup>¶</sup> preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all Confidence. There was now no Danger of the People's mistaking them, nor any Possibility of their setting up Jesus for a temporal King. There was now nothing to be feared either from the Jewish Rulers, or the Roman Powers. Christ's Ascension had declared that his Kingdom was not of this World; and placed him out of the Reach of his mistaken Votaries, or malicious Enemies. <sup>¶</sup> And therefore his Apostles went forth, and preached every where, <sup>¶</sup> and spake the Word of God with Boldness, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following.

<sup>¶</sup> Acts iv. 10.<sup>¶</sup> Acts xviii. 5.<sup>¶</sup> Acts xxviii. 31.<sup>¶</sup> Mar. xvi. 20.<sup>¶</sup> Acts iv. 31.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

HAVING now taken a View of the Ministry of *Jesus*, from the Beginning to the End, it is Time to consider, what may be inferred from this Enquiry, what Light may arise from hence, to enable us to judge of the Truth of his Pretensions. We have seen that he took all Occasions, which to him seemed fit and proper, of declaring that he was *the Son of God, the Messiah*, prophesied of in the *Old Testament*. Now, if this was not true, he must be either an Impostor, or Enthusiast; he must either be deceived himself in this Persuasion, or he must knowingly attempt to deceive others. And if it shall appear that he was neither Impostor, nor Enthusiast, it will follow, that he was *Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the World*. Let us therefore enter on this Enquiry with all Seriousness and Impartiality, it highly concerning us, as on the one Hand not to be misled by false Pretences to Revelation, so on the other not to reject the Testimony of *God*, and put from us the Salvation offered to us by his *Son*.

Now in order to satisfy ourselves whether *Jesus* was an Impostor, or not, it will be proper to enquire into his Character, his Pretensions, and the Means, which he used to support those Pretensions.

All

All Impostors must act on some worldly and temporal Motive; and this is generally discoverable in their Life and Character. What View then can it be said that *Jesus* proposed to himself? Did he seek to gratify some darling Lust or Passion, to set himself and his Followers free from the Restraints of Law, Morality, or Religion? But we have taken a View of his Ministry; and we find that both his Life and Doctrine declare the contrary: \* *He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.* No Vice, or Irregularity can be laid to his Charge: \* *His Enemies sought Matter of Accusation against him, and could find none:* His Life was not only free from Reproach, but a perfect Pattern of every Virtue: \* *He went about doing Good.* We have seen what Doctrines he preached; and have found his whole Life employed in teaching the purest, the strictest, and most disinterested Virtue, \* *a Righteousness exceeding the Righteousness of the Pharisees,* who were reckoned the strictest Sect among the Jews. He severely rebuked the Vices of the *Scribes and Pharisees,* and checked and corrected the Ambition, and temporal Views of his own Disciples. His whole Aim was to take Men's Affections off from the things of this World, and place them on things above. We find in his Gospel no Licence, or Encouragement, given to any Vice; no Com-

\* 1 Pet. ii. 22.    \* Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.    \* Acts x. 38.

\* Matt. v. 20.

mutation of true Virtue and Piety for carnal Observances, or outward Professions ; no Licentiousness, or loose Behaviour allowed under the Cloak of Religion, nor any of those wicked Tenets taught, by which the Peace of Society has been disturbed, and the Rules of Morality set aside, or broken through, by Men pretending to act under the Sanction of a divine Revelation.

Will it be said that Ambition was his Motive ? But we find no Tokens of such Ambition in his Life or Conversation ; no Methods used to advance himself ; no Diligence to retain Votaries ; no Arts practised to recommend himself to those in Power, or court the Favour of the Multitude. <sup>a</sup> He disclaimed the Office of a Ruler, or a Judge ; <sup>b</sup> he fled from those, who would have *made him a King* ; he attempted no Innovations in civil Affairs ; he raised no Seditions, nor made any Disturbances ; <sup>c</sup> *he did not strive, nor cry, neither was his Voice heard in the Streets.* He took all possible Care to give not the least Offence to the Civil Powers : <sup>d</sup> Obedience to the Rulers, both in Church, and State, was the Doctrine he taught the People, and practised himself.

Will it be said that Vanity was his ruling Passion ? But here again we must appeal to his Life and Conversation. It was justly observed by his

<sup>a</sup> Luk. xii. 14.      <sup>b</sup> Joh. vi. 15, &c.      <sup>c</sup> Matt. xii. 19

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xxiii. 2. xxii. 21.

Brethren—<sup>e</sup> There is no Man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If he had sought Honour, or Praise, he would have shewn himself to the World. On the contrary, he studiously avoided Popularity, and sought Privacy, and Retirement, as far as the Duties of his Ministry would permit. There appears not the least Tincture of Vain-Glory in his Conduct, or Conversation. His Life was one continued Act of Humiliation. Contempt and Obloquy were what he declared himself to expect, and what he actually suffered. <sup>f</sup> Meekness, and Lowliness of Heart, were the Doctrines he taught, and throughout his whole Life exemplified.

Lastly, will it be said that his Pretences were only a Cloak of Covetousness? But he neither amassed Wealth, nor used the common Means of procuring it. He lived in a voluntary Poverty: *He appeared in the Form of a Servant,* <sup>g</sup> and *had not where to lay his Head:* His whole Maintenance arose out of the scanty Contributions of his poor Followers, <sup>h</sup> who ministered to him of their Substance. It may possibly be urged, (and I would leave nothing that may be said unconsidered), that this Maintenance might be a sufficient Inducement to a Person of his Rank, and Birth, to set up for a Prophet; that Persons of Fortune, such as *the Wife of*

<sup>e</sup> Joh. vii. 4.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xi. 29.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. viii. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Luk. viii. 3.

*Herod's Steward*, might open their Purses to him; that these Contributions might be sufficiently large, and might afford him a better Subsistence, than he could hope for any other Way. It must be owned indeed that he had a <sup>1</sup> *Bag*, and a Treasurer; but the filling of this Bag seems to have been one of his least Concerns. *He went about doing Good*; but we cannot find that he made any Gain of the good Works he wrought. He asked no Charity, either for himself, or for any pretended publick Uses. He was so far from courting the Favour of the Rich, that he treated them on all Occasions with very little Ceremony. Nor were his Doctrines any way calculated to please them: <sup>2</sup> *Wo unto you that are Rich — 1 A rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, &c. were Doctrines, which could be no way agreeable to those who had large Possessions. <sup>3</sup> When *Nicodemus* came to him, did he make any Gain of him? Or did he appear any way sollicitous to retain so profitable a Disciple? On the contrary, his Discourse to him was such as must necessarily tend to discourage, and disgust him. <sup>4</sup> When applied to by a young and rich Man, who shewed a ready Disposition to join his Party, he gave him no Encouragement, but sent him away grieved and sorrowful.

<sup>1</sup> Joh. xii. 6.    <sup>2</sup> Luk. vi. 24.    <sup>3</sup> Matt. xix. 23.    <sup>4</sup> Joh. iii. 1, &c.    <sup>5</sup> Matt. xix. 16, &c.

He required him to sell all that he had, and give to the Poor; but we do not find that he asked anything for himself. • When Mary anointed his Feet with costly Ointment, we read that Judas Iscariot asked — *Why was not this Ointment sold for Three hundred Pence, and given to the Poor?* This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein. It appears from this Account, that our Lord out of his little Stock contributed to the Support of the Poor; and that, though his Steward was covetous, he himself was no way solicitous to increase his Stock, or enrich himself. This was such a Motive, as this thievish Bearer of the Bag did not dare to avow to him, but was forced to cloke his Covetousness under a seeming Concern for the Poor. • It has been above hinted, that the little Profit which this Man made of his Treasurerhip, might be probably his Inducement to betray his Master. And very empty may we suppose this Bag to have been, and very poor both the Lord and his Steward, when he was tempted to this Treachery by so small a Sum as *thirty Pieces of Silver*.

Let us next consider what were the Pretensions of Jesus. We have seen that he did not pretend to be such a temporal *Messiah*, as the Jews of those Times almost universally expected; he disclaimed all worldly Dominion and Authority. He asserted

• Joh. xii. 3, &c.

¶ See p. 299.

himself

himself to be <sup>q</sup> the Son of God, <sup>r</sup> who came down from Heaven; <sup>s</sup> he of whom the Scripture testified; <sup>t</sup> he whom the Father had sent, and who came to do his Father's Work; to save the World, and give everlasting Life to those who believed on him. <sup>u</sup> He foretold that he was to suffer many things, <sup>w</sup> and give his Life a Ransom for many; that he was to be crucified, and rise again the third Day; and after that to come in the Glory of his Father, and reward every Man according to his Works. Now these are such Pretensions, and such Doctrines, as can answer no End, which any Impostor can possibly have in View. As the Jews then were in great Expectation of a temporal *Messiah*, who should deliver them from the Power of the Romans, there might be some Temptation for a crafty Impostor to set himself up for such an one, and some Prospect of gaining by such a Pretension. And accordingly, we find that several such Pretenders did appear about this Time. But what End could be served by setting up for a spiritual *Messiah*? What Power, Grandeur, or Riches, could be gained by disclaiming all Title, and Pretension to them? He must live in Contempt, Poverty, and Misery here, and at last suffer an ignominious Death, to verify his own Predictions; and, if he was an Impostor, he must

<sup>q</sup> Joh. x. 36. <sup>r</sup> iii. 13. <sup>s</sup> v. 39. <sup>t</sup> v. 36, &c. iii. 16, 17. <sup>u</sup> Matt. xvi. 21, 27. <sup>w</sup> xx. 19, 28.

know that he could expect no Reward hereafter. Nay, even the visionary Hope of posthumous Fame could have no Place here. He could not expect really to *rise again*; he must therefore have known, if he had been an Impostor, that Death would put an End to all his Pretensions, and either obliterate his Memory, or render it infamous. And for the same Reason it cannot be said that the whole was a pious Fraud; that *Jesus* undertook this Imposture, not for any private Ends, but merely with a disinterested View of promoting the Practice of Piety and Virtue. A strange Design this for an Impostor! But these Predictions are inconsistent even with this extravagant Supposition. Would a Person in such Circumstances foretell that *he should be crucified, and rise again the third Day?* He could not but be sensible that the Event was not in his own Power, and that his Death would undeceive all Mankind, defeat his own Scheme, and undo the Work of his whole Life.

Lastly, as to the Means, which *Jesus* used to support his Pretensions, we have already seen that they were very different from those which Impostors generally make Use of. He employed neither Force, nor Flattery, nor Bribery: He used none of those soothing Arts, by which ambitious and cunning Men recommend themselves to the Favour of the World: He affected not Popularity; but avoided it: He courted not the Favour  
of

of those in Power; but reproved them with great Freedom and Severity. He encouraged not the Ambition of his own Disciples; but rebuked, and restrained it. His Doctrines were often such, as gave great Offence, both to the Rulers, and to the People; and were sometimes very disagreeable and grating to his own Disciples. He used no Diligence to retain Votaries, nor did he delight in a Number of Followers; he often discouraged and rejected such as would have been his Disciples.

\* When Multitudes were ready to proclaim him their *King*, he used great Art to escape from them, and elude their Design. <sup>7</sup> After the People had led him in Triumph into *Jerusalem*, he departed, and did bide himself from them. The only Means which he used to support his Claim, were such as every true Prophet must use, and such as he must have used on Supposition of the Truth of his Mission, viz. an Appeal to the ancient Prophecies, the Excellency of his Doctrines, and his miraculous Works. But here, I suppose, we shall be told that the World abounds with false Miracles; that this has been the common Engine, whereby Impostors have always endeavoured to support their Pretensions. Very true; Since Miracles have been always thought Proofs of the divine Interposition, it is no way strange, that those, who have

\* Joh. vi. 15, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Joh. xii. 36.

pretended to be sent by God, should lay Claim to the Power of working Miracles. But what are the Miracles which Impostors have pretended to? No Impostor can work any real Miracles. Miracles therefore alledged in favour of Imposture, must be either false Facts, or Facts not miraculous. \* Were then the Miracles of *Jesus* of either of these Kinds? The Facts recorded, if true, must have been miraculous. He raised the Dead; healed all who came to him instantaneously, with a Touch, or a Word's speaking, of the most invertebrate and incurable Diseases. No Power of Nature, no Strength of Imagination can effect such Cures. But Impostors may alledge false Facts. This has indeed often been the Case. But we shall find that all such pretended Miracles either have been wrought in private among their own Votaries, or such at least, who were well disposed to give credit to them; or else have been supported by the Civil Power, or by some strong Confederacy, artful and powerful enough to carry on the Cheat, to elude Enquiry, or prevent Detection. Were then the Miracles recorded of *Jesus* liable to this Objection? No; some of them were indeed wrought in private; but most of them were

\* See all this more fully proved in an ingenious Treatise entitled *The Criterion.*

wrought

wrought in the most publick Manner: <sup>a</sup> Many at *Jerusalem*, at the Times of the publick Festivals, when there was the greatest Concourse of People; <sup>b</sup> others in the Streets of *Villages and Cities*; <sup>c</sup> others in the publick *Synagogues*; <sup>d</sup> others before great *Multitudes*, who came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their *Infirmities*. Were then his Miracles wrought only before those, who were strongly prejudiced in his Favour, or predisposed to give Credit to them? We readily acknowledge that the *Jews* then looked for a *Messiah*, and that they expected to see Miracles done by him. Miracles therefore wrought by a Person, who took upon him this Character, might meet with the more favourable Reception. And had *Jesus* taken up the Notions of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, it might not have been impossible to carry on such a Cheat. But after he had provoked their Displeasure and Resentment, the Case was quite altered. Instead of meeting now with a ready Disposition to give credit to his Miracles, he might justly expect the most severe and strict Enquiry into any Pretensions of this Kind. And yet we find he still con-

<sup>a</sup> Joh. ii. 23.      iv. 45.      v. 1, &c.      Matt. xxi. 14.  
<sup>b</sup> Mar. vi. 56.      <sup>c</sup> Matt. ix. 35.      xii. 10, &c.      Mar. i. 23, &c.      <sup>d</sup> Luk. v. 15.      vi. 17, &c.      Matt. viii. 16, &c. xiv. 15, &c.      Mar. iii. 8, &c. and elsewhere.

tinued to work Miracles, and that often publickly, often before his greatest Enemies. <sup>c</sup> He healed the *Paralytick* before a vast Multitude of People, when there were *Pharisees*, and *Doctors of the Law*, sitting by. <sup>f</sup> Just before his Death the *Blind* and the *Lame* came to him in the Temple, and he healed them; and the *Chief Priests* and *Scribes* saw the wonderful Things that he did. <sup>g</sup> In the Case of the *Man born blind*, <sup>h</sup> and in that of *Lazarus*, we find his Enemies made the strictest Enquiry into the Truth, and yet could detect no Fraud. And to these Works he frequently appealed before his Enemies, as Proofs of his Mission: <sup>i</sup> *The Works that I do in my Father's Name* (said he to the unbelieving Jews) they bear Witness of me. Was there then any strong Confederacy to support his Pretensions? No. The *Roman Government*, the *Chief Priests* and *Rulers*, the *Rich* and *Great*, were all his Enemies, concerned, and ready to detect and expose any Fraud. <sup>k</sup> Those few Persons of Rank who believed on him, kept it to themselves *in secret for Fear of the Jews*. Only some few of the poorest and meanest of the People accompanied and assisted him in his Ministry, who had neither Art, nor Power, nor Interest, nor Cre-

<sup>c</sup> Matt. ix. 1, &c. Mar. x. 1, &c. Luk. v. 17, &c.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxi. 14, 15. <sup>g</sup> Joh. ix. <sup>h</sup> Joh. xi. <sup>i</sup> Joh. x. 25. <sup>k</sup> Joh. vii. 13. xii. 42. xix. 38.

dit to support any Imposture; while his Adversaries wanted neither Power nor Capacity, nor Will nor Opportunity, to detect it. Had therefore all these Miracles, said to have been wrought by Jesus, been only a Cheat, he could not have escaped Discovery. Let us apply what has been said to some particular Facts; as, for Instance, the two Miracles above-mentioned of the Cure of *the Man born blind*, and the raising *Lazarus* from the Dead.<sup>1</sup> As to *the Man born blind*, there could in that Case be no Room for Imposture. The Miracle was wrought at *Jerusalem*; that the Man had been *blind* was a thing well known to all the *Neighbourhood*; that he *was born blind*, not only he himself, but his Parents testified; and again, that he was cured; that, whereas he was blind, now he saw, was a Thing obvious to every Man's Senses. His Parents appear to have borne unwilling Testimony to the Fact; or, if you will suppose them to have combined with their Son, and with our *Lord*, in counterfeiting a Miracle, yet surely it could have been no difficult Matter to have found out the Truth. Evidence in this Case might easily have been procured from some of their Relations, or Neighbours, that this Man had never been blind, or at least was not born blind. And yet the *Pharisees*, though they en-

<sup>1</sup> Joh. ix.

quired

quired into the Matter immediately, and upon the Spot, yet could detect no Fraud; and though they shewed the greatest Unwillingness to believe the Fact, were yet forced at last to own it. They said unto him, *Give God the Praise; we know that this Man is a Sinner.*

<sup>m</sup> As to the Case of *Lazarus*, there could be no Confederacy. *His Disciples*, as plainly appears from their Behaviour, were perfectly ignorant of any such Design. When *Jesus* first opened to them his Intention of going to *Bethany*, they opposed it, fearing the *Jews*. They knew not that *Lazarus* was dead till *Jesus* told them so: They understood not what he meant by his Expression of *awaking him out of Sleep*, and followed him with great Unwillingness, *afraid and amazed*. Nor do there appear any Signs of Confederacy in *Lazarus's Family*: There was nothing done privately, or clandestinely: They buried their Brother after the usual Manner; and he had now *lain in the Grave four Days*. The thing was publickly known; and *many of the Jews*, some of them no way friendly disposed to *Jesus*, admitted after the usual Manner to *comfort* his Sisters. The Miracle was wrought in the most open and publick Manner, before Enemies as well as Friends: The Thing was done in the Neighbourhood of *Jerusalem*, at

<sup>m</sup> Joh. xi. See p. 247, 254.

a Time when the Chief Priests were most violently incensed against *Jesus*, and would have been glad of an Opportunity to detect him in any Fraud. Would then an Impostor have chosen to carry on a Cheat in such a Place, and at such a Time, and in such a Manner; or, if he had, would he not have infallibly been discovered? Had *Lazarus* never been dead, would it not have been easy by a proper Examination to have learnt the Truth from some of the Family, or Neighbourhood? Or, if he had still continued dead, would not this too have as easily been found out? And yet we find that the Pharisees, with all their Subtilty and Malice, could make no such Discovery; but the Result of their Consultations on this Occasion was — *What do we? for this Man doeth many Miracles. If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him.*

Our next Enquiry must be, whether *Jesus* might not be an Enthusiast. But we have now fully examined into his Character and his Conduct, and have throughout discovered no Symptoms of Enthusiasm. As there appears in his whole Conduct too much Sincerity and Disinterestedness for an Impostor, so there appears too much Art for an Enthusiast. Prudence, and Caution, and Reserve, are Things inconsistent with the Character of Enthusiasm. Such Kind of Persuasions generally strike in with the Principles instilled into Men's Minds

Minds by Education, Custom, or Fashion. Had Jesus therefore been an Enthusiast, he would have probably fancied himself such a *Messiah*, as all the rest of the People in general expected. There are however Instances to the contrary, of Enthusiasts setting themselves up in Opposition to popular Tenets: If we suppose Jesus to be such, we must suppose him possessed with a strong and vehement, though groundless Persuasion, that he was a Person sent by God to correct the false Notions of a *Messiah* entertained by the rest of the Jews, to set aside the Traditions of the Elders, and effect a thorough Reformation of Mankind. And such a strong Persuasion would have produced a like Vehemence in his Conduct. He would have *striven and cried, and his Voice would have been heard in the Streets:* He would not have unfolded his Doctrine by Degrees; but would have taken every Occasion of declaring his Pretensions without Reserve, and proclaiming himself the *Christ.* <sup>a</sup> *The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*—is not the Language of a Madman strongly persuaded that this *Kingdom* was already come, and he himself the *King.* To his Disciples he would have used no Caution, no Condescension to their Infirmities; but would have expected they should have immediately made full Acknowledgement of his Authority, and at

<sup>a</sup> Matt. iv. 17.

once have quitted all the Prejudices in which they had been brought up. Fully persuaded of the divine Assistance, he would have feared no Opposition either of *Jews* or *Romans*; he would have used no Art to escape, or elude their Malice; he would not have been afraid of any Disturbances, or Insurrections, which his Pretensions might have produced. But above all, his Behaviour in the last Stage of his Life, his Art and Skill in eluding and defeating the Cunning and Malice of his Enemies in so nice and critical a Conjunction, and so carrying himself to the last, that neither the Scribes and Pharisees could fasten any Crime on him, nor *Pilate* find any Cause of Death in him, speak him to be in his sober Senses, and no Madman, or Enthusiast.

Nor do we find in the Temper or Character of our *Lord* any of those Ingredients, which generally enter into the Composition of an Enthusiast. A melancholick Disposition, great Heat of Temper, and Self-Conceit, are the usual Characteristicks of Enthusiasts; but none of these are discoverable in the History of *Jesus*. He fasted indeed forty Days on his first Entrance into his Office, but ever afterwards he conversed freely with Mankind. He neither inflicted on himself any extravagant Penances, nor required them of his Followers: He lived not in the Wilderness, nor practised the Austerities, for which his Fore-run-

ner, *John the Baptist*, had been famous : He gave his Company at Feasts and Entertainments, and conversed with all Sorts of Men with Cheapfulness and Affability. <sup>o</sup> Those very Enemies, who said that *John had a Devil*, could find no Pretence of charging *Jesus* with Enthusiasm ; but chose rather to accuse him as *a Man gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners*.

Nor does any Heat of Temper discover itself in the Character of *Jesus*. The Prudence and Caution, which we have so often had Occasion to remark, the Coolness and Calmness, which he shewed on the most trying Occasions, the Patience and Resignation, with which he bore *the Contradiction of Sinners*, the most barbarous Indignities, and the most cruel Death, shew him to be the greatest Master of his Temper and Passions.

<sup>p</sup> *When he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not.* <sup>q</sup> *He was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth.* He neither bespake Persecution, nor exposed himself to it unnecessarily, nor behaved under it with Indecency ; either provoking the Magistrate, or reviling him ; either sinking under his sufferings, or vainly exulting in them.

Lastly, our *Lord* was so far from being puffed up

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xi. 18, 19.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 23.

<sup>q</sup> If. liii. 7.

with

with any Self-conceit, that he was the most perfect Pattern of Humility; *meek and lowly in Heart.* How many Instances have we seen of his avoiding Applause and Popularity? How backward and cautious was he of setting forth his Pretensions? How little desirous was he to retain Votaries? How often did he forbid his Miracles to be published, and restrain his Disciples from declaring who he was? There appears not (as we have already observed) any the least Tincture of Pride and Vainglory in his Conduct, or Conversation.

Lastly, the Miracles, which *Jesus* wrought, fully acquit him of all Suspicion of Enthusiasm. Impostors may pretend to Miracles; and have sometimes carried on the Cheat so artfully, as to impose on great Numbers. Enthusiasts deal chiefly in Raptures and Visions; they seldom pretend to real Miracles, capable of being judged of by the Senses. It is certainly beyond the Power of Enthusiasm to work any such Miracles; nor can it well be supposed that any Enthusiast could so far deceive himself, as for any considerable Space of Time to imagine that he worked real Miracles. Or, if this should be supposed possible, he must soon appear ridiculous to all the World besides. Suppose a Madman should

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xi. 29.

fancy

fancy that he could make *the Blind see, the Deaf bear, and the Lame walk*, would not the Experiment most probably soon undeceive him himself? Or, if we suppose him mad enough to persist in such a Persuasion, if we suppose it possible for him to fancy he had really healed a Person sick of a Fever in one Place, an Epileptick at a second, a Paralytick at a third, &c. and that before great Numbers of People, is it possible he could persuade other Persons that he wrought such Cures? On the contrary, would not the People of every Place mentioned testify, that no such things were ever seen, or heard of among them? This Argument will appear still stronger, if we consider that *Jesus* taught Doctrines contrary to the Tenets then in Vogue, and such as seemed to the *Jews* to threaten nothing less than the Subversion of their Religion. The *Jews* therefore were in a more especial Manner concerned to enquire into, and expose such Pretensions: And what could be more easy, than to expose the Reveries of a Madman, to disprove the Truth of Tales, which every one must know to be false?

To instance in the two Miracles above-mentioned. We read that *Jesus saw a Man which was blind from his Birth, and anointed his Eyes with Spittle and Clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam. He went his Way therefore, and*

and washed, and came seeing. Now neither the Power of Enthusiasm, nor any natural Virtue in the Means here made use of, could restore this Man to his Sight; nor is it possible he should fancy that he saw plainly, if he were still blind; or, if this were supposed possible, yet to all others his Blindness would have been very apparent.

Again, when *Jesus* called *Lazarus* out of his Grave, if you suppose that he himself were under a strong Persuasion that he could restore him to Life again; yet this Persuasion could not operate upon the dead Body: If *Jesus* had been only a mad Enthusiast, *Lazarus* would still have continued in his Grave, and his Madness and Folly must have been visible to all Mankind.

But still there remains one Objection behind. It may be urged that we have been all along arguing on the Supposition of the Truth of the Gospel History, which ought not to be taken for granted without Proof. But this we have to say; that this History has been the Gospel of *Christians* ever since Christianity first took its Rise. If therefore the Facts therein related are false, they must have been invented by the Apostles, and first Preachers of the Gospel. And then the same Enquiries, which we have been making with regard to *Jesus* himself, will again recur with regard to

his Apostles : If the Gospel is not true, they must have been either Impostors, or Enthusiasts, they must have been either deceived themselves, or have concurred to deceive Mankind.

This Argument has been often handled by *Christian* Writers ; \* and St. *Paul* in particular has been lately by a masterly Pen plainly shewn to be neither Impostor, nor Enthusiast. I need not therefore detain the Reader long on this Head. That the Apostles were no Enthusiasts will appear from the same Argument, which we have used with regard to their Master. It must require great Coolness of Head, as well to invent the History of *Jesus*, as to act the things recorded of him. As he shewed great Prudence, Uniformity, and Consistency in his whole Conduct, so to draw such a Character must require some Prudence and Sobriety. Again, we find not in the Apostles' Writings, or Character, any of the Symptoms of Enthusiasm. We cannot discover any Signs of Melancholy, Heat of Temper, or Self-Conceit. On the contrary, their Writings shew that *they are not mad, but speak forth the Words of Truth and Soborness*. Add to this, the plain, simple, and artless Manner, in which these Gospels are written. We find no extravagant Encomiums on their

\* See Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. *Paul*, in a Letter to *Gilbert Webster*, Esq.

Master,

Master, no severe Reflections on his Enemies, no artful Recommeñtations of his Person, or Doctrine, but a plain Recital of Matter of Fact, naked and unadorned. In short, we discover in these Books no Symptoms of Extravagance, or Fraud, but all possible marks of Sincerity and Truth. Lastly, they bear Witness to plain Facts, such as they could not be deceived in. They could not have believed that so many wonderful Works had been performed before their Eyes, if no such had ever been wrought; much less could they have fancied that they themselves wrought such Miracles, and could communicate the Power of working them to others.

As little Reason is there to accuse the Apostles of Imposture. They report that *Jesus* did many things, and performed many Miracles publickly, before great Numbers of People at *Jerusalem*, and elsewhere, often specifying the Place and Time; and this Report they published openly and confidently, both by Word and Writing, soon after his Death. 'St. Peter, in a Speech made a few weeks after our *Lord's* Crucifixion, thus publickly addresses the *Jews*—*Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

<sup>†</sup> *Acts ii. 22.*

*Him &c.* Now had Jesus wrought no *Miracles*; had the People, instead of *knowing*, that he *did Wonders and Signs in the Midst of them*, known the contrary, the Apostles, instead of meeting with Credit and Success, would doubtless have been instantly apprehended, and condemned as notorious and impudent Cheats. The thing was of great and public Concernment; the Jews were highly interested in the Affair; they actually shewed all possible Malice against the Spreaders of this Report; they had all the Power and Opportunity possible of bringing the Truth to Light. If therefore the whole, or any considerable Part of what they related of their Master had been false, it could not have escaped Detection. And if it is true, it follows that Jesus was, what he asserted himself to be, *the Son of God*, and that *whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting Life.*

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## A P P E N D I X.

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### C H A P. I.

**I**T was thought proper in the foregoing Papers, to take a View of the Ministry of *Jesus*, from the Beginning to the End; this appearing to be one of the best and surest Means of judging of the Justice of his Pretensions, and the Truth of the Religion which he taught. It may give us farther Satisfaction, if we enquire into the Methods, which his *Apostles* after his Death took in propagating this Religion, and see whether the Conclusions already drawn, may not from hence receive additional Strength and Support.

But here our Accounts are very short. We know that Christianity was soon after our *Lord's* Decease propagated in almost all Parts of the then known World; and yet not one of the *Apostles* has left us, or, as far as we can find, ever did write any Account of his Ministry. They left behind them no particular Histories of their Labours and Miracles, no long Journals of *God's* special Providences to them. The only authentick Account which we have of the *Acts* of the

*Apostles*, is from St. *Luke*. <sup>a</sup> It appears from the Beginning, that it was written by the same Person, who wrote the Gospel ascribed to St. *Luke*; and probably contains such Facts only, as he was an Eye-witness to, or of which he had certain and immediate Knowledge, <sup>b</sup> and *perfect Understanding*. We have here an Account of some of the first Transactions of the *Apostles* at *Jerusalem*, where we may suppose St. *Luke* was present; and afterwards, of the Travels of St. *Paul*, <sup>c</sup> whose Companion St. *Luke* was. We have no authentick Account of the Travels of the other Apostles; and know not certainly where they preached the Gospel, or what became of them. The Wisdom of God seems to have foreseen the superstitious Regard, which After-Ages would pay to these holy Men, and purposely to have hidden their Transactions in the Dark. St. *Peter's* Zeal, and Diligence in preaching the Gospel, first to the *Jews*, and afterwards to the *Gentiles*, is here recorded; but we have no Account of his Travels afterwards, nor can we find in Scripture that he ever was at *Rome*. <sup>d</sup> The *Virgin Mary* is once here mentioned, as continuing in Prayer and Supplication with the *Apostles*, and other Brethren, after our *Lord's* Ascension; and after this we hear no more of her.

<sup>a</sup> *Acts i. 1.*   <sup>b</sup> See *Luk. i. 3.*   <sup>c</sup> See *Col. iv. 14.*   <sup>d</sup> *Tim. iv. 11.*   <sup>e</sup> *Cor. viii. 18, 19.*   <sup>f</sup> *Acts i. 14.*

The rest of her History is supplied by legendary Writers.

But this Account, which St. *Luke* has left us of the Acts of the Apostles, though very short and concise, is yet fully sufficient for the Purpose. It gives us sufficient Information of the Method, which the *Apostles* took in propagating the *Gospel*; and it carries with it all possible Marks of Truth and Sincerity. It is very plain, and easy to be understood; there is scarcely any one Book in either the Old, or New Testament, where we meet with fewer Difficulties. It contains no Encomiums on the *Apostles*; but sets forth their Failings, as well as their wonderful Works. We have no severe Reflections on the *Jews*, or the Persecutors and Enemies of *Christianity*. The Miracles particularly insisted on are but few; and those set forth with no Pomp of Words, or unnecessary Enlargements. We have nothing but a plain Narration of Matter of Fact; there is throughout no Appearance of Art or Disguise, but all the Tokens of Truth.

\* Our Historian begins with a short Account of what passed after our *Lord's* Resurrection. He tells us, that *Jesus shewed himself alive after his Passion to his Apostles, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days, and speaking of the Things*

\* *Acts i. 1, &c.*

pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Before his Ascension he commanded them that they should not depart from *Jerusalem*, but wait for the Promise of the *Father*; and assured them, that they should be baptized with the *Holy Ghost* in the Space of a few Days. St. *Luke* does not scruple to inform us, that the *Apostles* still retained their old Prejudices; and, notwithstanding all that our *Saviour* had taught them, still expected a temporal *Messiah*. Our *Lord's* Resurrection revived their Hopes; and they asked of him, saying, *Lord, wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* He told them it was not for them to know the Times, or the Seasons, which the Father had put in his own Power; but that they should receive Power after that the *Holy Ghost* was come upon them, and should be *Witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Part of the Earth*. Our *Lord* still observes his old Method of Instruction. He waves a full Answer to their Question; he does not tell them in plain Terms, that they were to look for no such Kingdom; he leaves it to the *Holy Ghost* to instruct them in this Point: But he intimates, that his *Gospel* was to be preached not only to the *Jews*, but even to the *Samaritans*, and to all the World in general. When he had spoken these Things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a Cloud received him out of their Sight. And two Angels

*Angels appeared to them, who told them that this same Jesus should again so come in like Manner, as they had seen him go into Heaven.*

*The Apostles thus comforted, and filled with Joy, by our Lord's Resurrection, and Ascension, returned to Jerusalem, and there remained together with other of his Disciples, waiting for the Completion of our Lord's Promise. They attended continually the Service of the Temple, praising and blessing God; and they had their private Meetings in an upper Room, where they all continued with one Accord in Prayer and Supplication. During this Time Peter proposed to them to fill up the Vacancy in the College of the Apostles made by Judas's Apostacy. Many were the Witnesses of our Lord's Resurrection, and Miracles; <sup>g</sup> but the Apostles were peculiarly commissioned to be Witnesses unto him, and to go and teach all Nations; <sup>h</sup> and them had Christ particularly sent, as the Father sent him. It was therefore proper to ordain one to succeed Judas in this Ministry. And this they did by first appointing two, and then, after having prayed to God, deciding by Lot which of these two should be chosen, and <sup>i</sup> enter on this Province.*

<sup>f</sup> Acts i. 12, &c. Luk. xxiv. 50, &c. <sup>g</sup> Luk. xxiv. 48.  
Matt. xxviii. 19. Mar. xvi. 15. <sup>h</sup> Joh. xx. 21.

<sup>i</sup> περιστῆναι εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον — seems to be more properly applicable to Matthias, than to Judas. *Matthias* was chosen  
by

\* In the next Chapter we read of the Completion of our Lord's Promise to his Apostles. *When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one Accord in one Place. And suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind, and it filled all the House where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* This wonderful Phænomenon drew great Multitudes together; <sup>1</sup>*the Sound from Heaven was probably heard at a considerable Distance, and brought Numbers of People to the Place from whence it came.* This being one of their great Festivals at Jerusalem, there was a great Concourse of People there, and devout Men, Jews and Proselytes, were come there from most Parts of the then known World. These were all greatly amazed, when they, who understood, and spake different Languages, heard the Apostles speak in so many different Tongues. And their Wonder was greatly increased, when they observed that these were all

by Lot to take Part of this Ministry, and to enter on his proper Province among the other Apostles. See Hammond on Schism, C. iv. S. 15. Reply to Cath. Gent. Answ. C. iv. S. 2. Answ. to Schism disarmed, C. iii. S. 4.

\* Acts ii. 1, &c.      <sup>1</sup> Γερουσίας δὲ τῆς φωνῆς τάυτης οὐκῶς τοῖς πληθεῖς. ii. 6.

Galileans,

*Galileans, unlearned and ignorant Men, who could have had no Opportunity of seeing, or learning the Languages of other Countries. This was undoubtedly a most astonishing Miracle.* <sup>m</sup> *The Jews, as we have seen, expected a Sign from Heaven; this was now given them—There came suddenly a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind. The Publication of the Gospel was attended with the same divine Presence and Power, that the giving of the Law was, but not with the same Circumstances of Terror.* <sup>n</sup> *Here was no Trumpet, nor terrifying Voice; nor Blackness, and Darkness, and Tempest: But God's Presence and Power were sufficiently signified by an extraordinary Sound, and the Appearance of the Divine Glory, which appeared here, not as it did in the Sanctuary, in one undivided Blaze;* <sup>o</sup> *but it divided itself into several Flames, or Tongues of Fire, which sat on each of the Apostles, thereby signifying that every one of them was endued with Power from on high.* <sup>p</sup> *And this happened also on the same Day on which the Law was delivered from Mount Sinai, on the Feast of Pentecost,* <sup>q</sup> *on which the First-Fruits of the*

<sup>m</sup> See p. 58.      <sup>n</sup> See Heb. xii. 18, 19.      Exod. xix. 16, &c.

<sup>o</sup> διεμπεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὡρεὶ πυρὸς—divided Tongues, as it were of Fire. See Hammond on Matt. iii. 16.

<sup>p</sup> Comp. Exod. xii. 1. and xix. 1, 11. See Patrick Comment. on Exod. xix. 1. and Lev. xxiii. 16.

<sup>q</sup> Exod. xxiii. 16. xxiv. 22.

Wheat-Harvest were offered. Thus did every Thing relative to the Gospel-Dispensation answer to the Ceremonies of the Law. *Christ* was (as we have seen) crucified on the very Day, and Hour, on which the Passover was sacrificed; he rose from the Dead on the same Day on which the *First-Fruits* of Barley were offered; and the *Holy Ghost* was given on the *Feast of Pentecost*, on which the *First-Fruits* of Wheat were offered.

No Miracle was ever more notorious, or better attested, than this was. It was wrought at *Jerusalem*, the chief City of *Judea*, at the Time of a publick Festival, when not only the whole Nation was assembled, but *Jews and Proselytes from all Parts* of the then known World, came to worship there. It was wrought before Enemies, Persons strongly prejudiced against *Christ* and his *Apostles*; immediately after our *Lord* had been put to an ignominious Death, and thereby what Credit and Interest he might have among the People quite funk, and all the Expectations which they might have had from him, vanished. It was such a Miracle, as no Art could feign, and no Imagination fancy. The *Apostles* had no Power to produce a *Sound from Heaven*, or raise a mighty Wind, such as should alarm all *Jerusalem*; nor could they counterfeit an Appearance of Fire on each of their Heads; much less could they be able to speak in several Tongues. A strong Imagination cannot teach

teach Men in a Moment a Language which they never learnt ; or, if it were possible they could persuade themselves that they talked all Sorts of Languages, they would scarcely have been able to persuade any one else. And there was as little Room here for Fraud, as for Enthusiasm. <sup>1</sup> The Apostles were known to be *unlearned and ignorant Men* : They had accompanied Jesus for some Time, and were well known to many of the Jews, *who took Knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus* ; and from the Knowledge of their Persons, as well as from their Garb and Behaviour, the Jews might easily see that they were born and bred in Galilee. It must be equally impossible for such Men, either so suddenly to acquire, or to counterfeit, the Gift of Tongues. The Voice and Appearance from Heaven, had drawn together a great *Multitude*, some *Thousands* of People, amongst whom were *devout Men* come from all Parts of the World, who spoke and understood several different Languages : These *every Man heard them speak in their own Tongue, wherein they were born*. They could not but know their own native Tongue ; nor was it possible to impose on any Man, much less on such a Multitude, in such a Point. We read indeed, that some *mocked, and said, these Men are full of new Wine* : Nor was it

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 13.

unnatural

unnatural for ignorant and prejudiced Persons, who knew only their own Language, to entertain such an Imagination; but they hereby shewed only their own Ignorance. The Testimony of *devout Men out of every Nation under Heaven*, and the wonderful Effect which this Event had upon the Minds of so many, is sufficient to establish beyond Contradiction the Reality of the Miracle. Besides, it was not only on this particular Occasion, nor on the Apostles alone, that this Gift of Tongues was conferred. The Apostles not only enjoyed this Gift themselves, but communicated it to others also: \* St. Peter assured his Audience, that if they would *repent*, and be *baptized*, they also should receive the *Gift of the Holy Ghost*: † And we find that all *Christians were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the Word of God with Boldness*. Miraculous Gifts therefore were then conferred on all; and this particular Gift of Tongues, we may reasonably suppose, was conferred on many; ‡ for we read, that when St. Peter preached the Gospel to *Cornelius*, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word*, ¶ as it did *on the Apostles at the Beginning*; and they *spake with Tongues, and magnified God*. And again, § when St. Paul baptized, and laid his Hands on certain Disciples of St. John, *the Holy Ghost came on*

\* Acts ii. 38.

† iv. 31.

‡ x. 44, &amp;c.

¶ xi. 15.

§ xix. 1, &amp;c.

them,

them, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied.

Lastly, St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of the Gift of Tongues, as bestowed on several at Corinth, and gives them Directions about the Use of it, and cautions them against the Abuse of it. Here again there could be no Room for Fraud, or Enthusiasm. If we could suppose the Apostles themselves to have antecedently learnt the different Languages which they spoke, they could not have instantaneously conveyed this Knowledge to others; nor is it possible for Persons to fancy themselves possessed of such a Gift; or, if it were, their Madness must be evident to every one else. Lastly, there is no Reason to suspect that the Scripture hath given us a false Account of this Fact. St. Luke wrote his Acts of the Apostles soon after this Effusion of the Holy Ghost, probably in about thirty Years: He specifies Time and Place, speaking of it as a notorious Fact, wrought before Multitudes of People, and tells us that three Thousand Souls were at once converted by this Miracle. The Truth or Falshood of these Particulars must, at the Time when he wrote, have been commonly known; and, if he had falsified, the Jews easily might, and certainly would have convicted him of Falshood; nor could his History

ever after have gained any Credit in the World. Again, St. Paul, (as was before observed), in an Epistle addressed to the whole Church of *Corinth*, <sup>2</sup> tells them that he himself *spake with Tongues*, and that several amongst them had the same Gift.

<sup>3</sup> Now, if the *Corinthians* knew that they had no such Gift amongst them, (and they could not but know whether they had it, or not), they must have regarded the Author of this Epistle as a Man out of his Senses, instead of revering him as an *Apostle of God*.

<sup>4</sup> While the People stood amazed at this extraordinary Miracle, and doubted what was the Design and Tendency of it, St. Peter *stood up with the other eleven Apostles*, and began with obviating the Calumny which some had raised, who imagined what had happened to be the Effect of *Drunkenness*.

<sup>5</sup> It was usual among the *Jews* on Festival Days to fast, and neither eat nor drink, till after the Time of Service in the Temple, which was at *the third Hour*; and therefore St. Peter argues, that it was unreasonable at such a Time to accuse them of *Drunkenness*. But this, he goes on to tell them, was *that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel*, <sup>6</sup> who had prophesied of a wonderful *Effusion of God's Spirit in the latter Days upon all Flesh*.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 18. <sup>3</sup> See Ld. *Littelton's Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*, p. 92, &c. <sup>4</sup> Acts ii. 12, &c. <sup>5</sup> See *Grotius, Hammond, Joseph. de Vit. sua S. 54.* <sup>6</sup> Joel ii. 28, &c.

But

But what is most observable in this Speech of St. Peter is the Boldness and Openness with which he asserted, that *Jesus was the Christ*, and bore *Witness* to his *Resurrection*. These Apostles, when their Master was apprehended, had all *forsaken him, and fled*: St. Peter indeed ventured *to follow him afar off*; but he soon after shamefully denied him. It was with great Difficulty that they were persuaded to believe his Resurrection; and just before his Ascension, we find them *expecting the Kingdom to be restored to Israel*. But now we find at once a sudden Change wrought in them: St. Peter, in the Name of the rest, thus bespeaks the *Jews* — <sup>\*</sup>*Ye Men of Israel, hear these Words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him, being delivered by the determinate Counsel, and Fore-Knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and slain.* And thus he concludes his Speech — <sup>f</sup>*Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Jesus, as we have seen, preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God with great Caution and Reserve: He never could be prevailed upon openly and publickly to declare himself the *Christ*; and scarcely ever to his own Disciples did he

\* Acts ii. 22, &c.

f ii. 36.

declare this Truth in plain and positive Terms. We have seen the Reasons why he acted with such Caution: Those Reasons now ceasing, his Apostles immediately, with all Openness and Freedom, declared that *Jesus* was both *Lord* and *Christ*, which is a sufficient Answer to all Objections on this Head.

Consider we the Place, and Time, and Persons before whom this Declaration was made. At *Jerusalem*, at the Time of a publick Festival, before several Thousands, before a promiscuous Multitude of *Jews*, and Persons assembled from every Nation under Heaven, did they declare that *Jesus* was the *Christ*. Without any Regard to the Prejudices of the *Jews*, in direct Contradiction to all their prevailing Opinions, did they confidently aver, that *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, (<sup>¶</sup> a City and Country from whence they expected no good thing), that same *Jesus*, whom they had crucified, and put to a Death thought ignominious and accursed, was both *Lord* and *Christ*: And for the Truth of this they appealed to their own Experience, and Knowledge of his *Miracles*—*Jesus* of *Nazareth*, a Man approved of God among you by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Here could be no Room for Fraud, or Delusion: The *Jews* could not but know whether

¶ Joh. i. 46.

such

such *Miracles* had been wrought amongst them, or not. If no such *Miracles* had been wrought, the *Apostles* surely could have made no Converts by an impudent Assertion of a notorious Falshood : And, if these *Miracles* were really wrought, it follows that *Jesus* was, what St. *Peter* taught him to be, *both Lord and Christ*.

Lastly, St. *Peter* here, in the Name of all the *Apostles*, bears Witness to *our Lord's Resurrection*.<sup>a</sup> He proves, from a Passage in the Old Testament, that *Christ* was to rise again ; and that *Jesus* really did rise from the Dead, he proves by the Testimony of himself, and the other *Apostles* — *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses*. It was now scarcely above seven Weeks since our *Lord* was crucified : <sup>1</sup> He was looked upon by the *chief Priests and Rulers* as a dangerous *Deceiver*, \* one who perverted the People : They had received many personal Affronts from him ; they found their Credit and Authority attacked, and thought their Religion and Law in Danger ; <sup>1</sup> and were afraid that his Pretensions would provoke the *Romans* to take away both their Place and Nation. Now here are twelve Men, who appear in a few Weeks after, and with the greatest Confidence testify publickly in the Temple, at a solemn Festival, before Thou-

<sup>a</sup> *Acts ii. 25, &c.*      <sup>i</sup> *Matt. xxvii. 63.*      <sup>\* Luk. xxiii.  
2, 14.</sup>      <sup>1</sup> *Joh. xi. 48.*

sands of People, that *this Jesus was risen again*. What think you must have been the Consequence, if this had been known, or suspected, to be a Fals-hood? Would not these chief Priests and Rulers have made immediate Enquiry into it? And had they not all possible Means, and Opportunity, of discovering the Truth? Was it not easy to enquire what was become of the dead Body? If it had been fraudulently conveyed away, they doubtless would have enquired, and never desisted from their Enquiry, till they had discovered who had secreted it, and what was become of it. Had there been any Fraud in the Case, not only the *Apostles*, but the *Women*, and several others must have been privy to it. The *Jews* wanted neither Force to compel, nor Motives of Interest to bribe, some out of so great a Number to confess the Truth. A Secret trusted to so many, most of them Persons of low Birth and Education, could never have escaped Discovery. <sup>m</sup> *The chief Priests and Pharisees took Care to set a Watch over the Sepulchre, and to seal the Stone, and make all things as sure as they could.* <sup>n</sup> These Precautions proving fruitless, they had set about a Story, that *his Disciples had come by Night, and stolen the Body away, while the Guards slept*; but yet they neither punished these Guards, nor made any Search after the Body, nor any Enquiry after these *Disci-*

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxvii. 65, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xxviii. 11, &c.

ples,

ples, till they themselves openly appeared, and declared before all the People, that *Jesus was risen from the Dead*. How they behaved afterwards we shall soon see.

Another Question, which naturally occurs here, is, what could move the *Apostles* to make this publick Declaration. Great Expectations they had from their Master, because they believed him to be the *Messiah*: But his Death must have put an End to all these Expectations. What then could embolden them thus confidently to declare that he was risen, and that they had seen, and heard him? They could not but know, whether they had seen, and heard him, or not: And if they had not, what Motive could induce them thus confidently to affirm, and thus resolutely to persist in affirming, what every one of them knew to be false? How could they hope to persuade their Countrymen, that this very Person, whom they had *crucified*, and whom they themselves knew to be still among the Dead, *was Lord and Christ*? What could they expect from such an ill-concerted Imposture but universal Contempt, and exemplary Punishment? Again, had the Apostles been capable of contriving such an Imposture, they would surely have carried it on with more Art and Policy: They would have whispered the thing at first privately among their Friends and Adherents, before such only as were willing to give Credit to it, and easy to be im-

posed upon : They would not have declared it publickly, till the Persons chiefly concerned to detect them were dead, or till their Malice was a little cooled. Instead of this, they bare Testimony to our *Lord's* Resurrection in such a Manner, as must, if their Testimony had been false, have most certainly exposed them to Detection : And yet they met with no Contradiction from their Enemies, and the greatest Credit and Success amongst the People.

° The present Effect of this Miracle on *the Day of Pentecost*, and St. Peter's bold and sensible Speech, was the Conversion of about *three thousand* Persons, *who were baptized, and continued in the Apostles' Doctrine and Fellowship*—a plain Proof of the Reality of the Miracle, and the Notoriety of the Facts alledged: Nothing less than the Force of Truth could have had such an Effect. St. Peter adds, that *the Promise was unto them, and to their Children, and to all that were afar off, even as many as the Lord their God should call.* But how came St. Peter to extend his Views to those *that were afar off*? ♦ And so again in his Speech in the Temple, he tells the Jews, that *they were the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with their Fathers, saying unto Abram, And in thy Seed shall all the Kindreds of the Earth be blessed*; and then adds—*Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless*

° *Acts ii. 37, &c.*      ♦ *iii. 25, 26.*

*you,*

you, &c. Here again the Calling of the *Gentiles* is plainly signified. But I ask again, how came St. Peter to teach this Doctrine? It is true indeed that the Conversion of the *Gentiles* was foretold by the *Prophets*, and that our *Saviour* himself plainly taught this Doctrine; but it is as true, that his *Disciples* understood none of these things. <sup>4</sup> The *Jews* held the *Gentiles* in great Contempt; and appropriated the Favour of God to themselves alone: And our *Lord's Disciples* were deeply infected with the popular Error. <sup>5</sup> They expected to the last a temporal *Messiah*; <sup>6</sup> and even after our *Lord's Resurrection*, they hoped that he would soon restore again the *Kingdom to Israel*. Nay, these Prejudices continued afterwards; <sup>7</sup> the *Jews* were greatly offended, when the *Gospel* was first preached to the *Gentiles*; nor did St. Peter himself think it lawful to keep Company with those of another Nation, till he was first by a Vision, and particular Revelation, commanded so to do. How then came this *Apostle* here to acquaint the *Jews*, that the *Promise was not only to them, and to their Children, but to all that were afar off?* Is it not plain that he spake this, not of himself, but as he was moved by the *Holy Ghost*? Such Doctrine, as it was unlikely to come from the

<sup>4</sup> See Acts x. 28. xi. 3. <sup>5</sup> See Luk. xix. 11. xxii. 24.  
Matt. xx. 20, &c. <sup>6</sup> Acts 1, 6. <sup>7</sup> Acts x. xi.

Mouth of a Jew, so was it no way palatable, or agreeable to those who heard him.

<sup>“</sup> The new Converts, convinced by the stupendous Miracle, which they saw and heard, continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, (that is, probably, receiving the Holy Eucharist), and in Prayers. And Fear came upon every Soul; and many Wonders and Signs were done by the Apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their Possessions and Goods, and parted them to all Men, as every Man had Need. Nor did they after this seek Privacy, or hide themselves from publick Notice; but daily frequented the Temple, and breaking Bread (*ταῦτα ὀΐκον*) in the House, did eat their Meat with Gladness and Singleness of Heart; <sup>“</sup> that is, besides attending the publick Worship, they celebrated the Eucharist among themselves at Home, or in an House allotted for that Purpose — *Ἄφεστε τὸν Θεόν, καὶ ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὄλον τὸν λαόν* — <sup>\*</sup> Praising God, and shewing Kindness to all the People. And the Church received daily an Accession of new Converts.

The two next Chapters give us a remarkable Account of a Miracle wrought by St. Peter, and

<sup>“</sup> Acts ii. 42, &c.    <sup>“</sup> Or the Words may be interpreted, that, as they frequented the publick Assemblies, so they lived cheerfully and hospitably at Home.

<sup>\*</sup> See Hammond.

St. John, and of the Behaviour both of the Apostles, and of the Jews, on this Occasion. <sup>y</sup> St. Peter and St. John, going up together into the Temple, at the Hour of Prayer, found there at the Gate a Man, who had been lame from his Mother's Womb. He asking Alms of them, Peter said, Silver and Gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the Right Hand, and lifted him up: And immediately his Feet and Ankle-Bones received Strength. And he leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. This was most certainly a notable and undoubted Miracle. <sup>z</sup> This Man was above forty Years old, and had been lame from his Mother's Womb. He was laid daily at the Gate of the Temp'e; he and his Condition could not but be well known to all who frequented the Temple: They had seen him for some Time lame and impotent; and they now all saw him, standing upright, walking, and leaping, proclaiming aloud his Cure, and praising God. <sup>a</sup> No Art of Man could restore such an one to the Use of his Limbs instantly, only by a Touch, or speaking a Word. It could not be the Effect of any Fancy, or strong Imagination: No Force of Imagination could enable a Man lame from his Mother's Womb,

<sup>y</sup> Acts iii. 1.      <sup>z</sup> iv. 22.      <sup>a</sup> See Dr. Douglas's Criterion,  
p. 250, &c.

and

and labouring under some original Defect in his Limbs, instantly to stand upright, walk, and leap. Nor did this Man apply to the *Apostles* for a Cure, or know, or imagine, when he was laid at the Gate of the Temple, that they made any Pretensions to the Power of Healing. He was brought there to ask *Alms* of them that entered into the Temple: He begged an *Alms* of Peter and John, and expected to receive some Money of them: To be restored to the Use of his Limbs was what he neither asked, nor expected; and therefore there could be no Impression made on his Mind, which could contribute any thing to the Relief received. This Cure was wrought publickly, *in the Temple*, at the *Hour of Prayer*, before all the People, who attended the Service of God there; and they were all filled with *Wonder and Amazement* at that which had happened unto him. Lastly, This Miracle the *Apostles* performed in the Name of *Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, and purposely in Attestation of his Religion, and to induce Men to believe in his Name. Our *Blessed Saviour* wrought his Miracles in his own Name, and by his own Power: But his *Apostles* wrought all their Miracles, not in their own, but in his Name. They sought not their own Honour, nor claimed to themselves any Merit from their wonderful Works — <sup>b</sup> *Ye Men of Israel*, (said St.

• Acts iii. 12, &c.

Peter)

Peter) why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own Power or Holiness we had made this Man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the Presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a Murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the Dead; whereof we are Witnesses. And his Name, through Faith in his Name, hath made this Man strong, whom ye see and know: &c. St. Peter proceeds to exhort them to repent, and be converted, and to believe in Christ, who was foretold by Moses, and all the Prophets, and tells them that they were the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant, which God made with their Fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy Seed shall all the Kindreds of the Earth be blessed.

In this Speech of St. Peter we may remark his Humility, in attributing nothing to his own Power, or Holiness; the Boldness and Confidence, with which he preached Jesus, and bore Witness to his Resurrection; the Freedom with which he censures the Jews and their Rulers—*Ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a Murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life.* And Lastly, we may observe, the wonderful Effect which this Miracle, and this Speech had upon the People—

Many

*Many of them which heard the Word believed, and the Number of the Men was about five thousand. This is a prodigious Number, especially if we consider that these were only such as were baptized, and made Profession of the Christian Faith. The People in general magnified the Apostles, and all Men glorified God for that which was done ; and no less than five thousand actually embraced the Christian Faith, and were baptized into the Profession of it, and continued in the Apostles' Doctrine and Fellowship.*

The Openness and Freedom, with which the Apostles preached the Resurrection of Jesus, and the great Success which their Doctrine met with, alarmed the chief Priests and Rulers, who had so lately put Jesus to Death. They could not but have heard of the wonderful Miracle on the Day of Pentecost, and of the Witness then given by the Apostles to our Lord's Resurrection ; but they took no Notice of them till they appeared publickly in the Temple : They then began to take the Alarm. The Captain of the Temple might fear a Tumult : The Sadducees found their favourite Doctrines called in Question ; they were grieved that they taught the People, and preached through Jesus the Resurrection from the Dead : The chief Priests and Rulers saw their Credit, and Interests at Stake ; and their Religion, and Government in Danger. But what Methods did they take ? They laid Hands on them, and put them in Hold. But the Truth of the Miracle

cle, they did not, and could not question. The thing was done publickly. The Man, on whom this Miracle was wrought, was not secreted, or conveyed away; nor did he avoid their Scrutiny. <sup>c</sup> They saw the Man which was healed standing with them, and could say nothing against it. That a notable Miracle had been done by the Apostles was manifest to all them that dwelt in Jerusalem, and they could not deny it. <sup>d</sup> They therefore, having convened Peter and John before them, asked them by what Power, or by what Name they had done this. They answered them with such a Boldness and Confidence, as nothing but Truth could inspire. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye Rulers of the People, and Elders of Israel, if we this Day be examined of the good Deed done to the impotent Man, by what Means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the People of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the Dead, even by him doth this Man stand here before you whole. This is the Stone, which was set at nought of you Builders, which is become the Head of the Corner. Neither is there Salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved. Observe we here again how freely these Apostles combated all the Prejudices, and Prepossessions of these chief Priests, and Rulers: They

<sup>c</sup> Acts iv. 14, 16.

<sup>d</sup> iv. 7, &c.

preached

preached unto them Jesus of Nazareth, whom they crucified. Him they openly averred to be the Christ, and that God had raised him from the Dead, and that there is no Salvation in any other. The Rulers were amazed at the Boldness, and Spirit with which they spoke. They took Knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus ; they knew that they were unlearned and ignorant Men, by Birth and Education unqualified to act and speak in this Manner. They could not deny the Truth of the Miracle ; and therefore they contented themselves with threatening them, and commanding them not to speak at all, nor teach in the Name of Jesus. The Apostles answered them with great Boldness—Whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the Things which we have seen and heard. And yet, notwithstanding this bold and resolute Answer, they only farther threatened them, and let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the People ; for all Men glorified God for that which was done. Had there been any Fraud, or Collusion in this Affair, it must have been easy to have discovered it. Had this Man never been lame, or had no real Cure been wrought on him, these Chief Priests and Rulers might have easily manifested this to the Conviction of all Mankind : But their whole Procedure on this Occasion carries with it the plainest Tokens of Self-Conviction.

Nor

Nor was this Cure of the lame Man only a notorious Miracle; but it was wrought in Attestation of another Matter of Fact, our *Lord's Resurrection*. The Persons before whom *Peter* and *John* were convened, were *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, and the *Elders* and *Rulers* of the People, the very Persons who had persecuted *Jesus* to Death; and who had so carefully guarded against all Fraud with regard to the Dead Body, and who had set about a Story, that *his Disciples came by Night, and stole the Body away*. These very Persons had now two of these very *Disciples* before them, who were supposed to have been principally concerned in this Theft; and yet we find no Charge laid against them, nor any Enquiry made what was become of the Dead Body: Nay, they confidently averred to the Face of these *chief Priests and Elders*, that *God had raised this Jesus, whom they had crucified, from the Dead*; and that they were his *Witnesses of these things*; and that *they spoke the things which they had seen and heard*. Did not every Motive of Interest, Honour, Conscience, and Religion, prompt these *Rulers* to make the strictest Scrutiny into this Affair? Did not the same Principle, which urged them to put *Jesus* to Death, urge them also to prevent the Belief of his *Resurrection*? Did not the same Reasons, which moved them so carefully to prevent any Fraud in this Matter, move them also to detect

test it? Did not this bold Assertion of these *Disciples* provoke, and necessitate them to make all possible Enquiry into the Truth? Why then was no Search made, no Questions asked on this Subject? Was it not natural to ask what was become of the Body of *Jesus*? Where he had appeared, and who had seen him after he was risen? And would not such Questions, if properly pursued so soon after the supposed Fact, have certainly led to the Discovery of the Fraud, if there had been any? If these *chief Priests* had had any Reason to believe, or suspect, that the Body of *Jesus* had been fraudulently conveyed away, they would doubtless have kept these *Disciples* in Hold, and obliged them to discover their Accomplices. Nor were they indeed far off. All the twelve *Apostles*, besides several others, who had companied with *Jesus*, were then at *Jerusalem*, and daily frequented the *Temple*,<sup>c</sup> and had just before joined in bearing Witness publickly to the same Fact. These then the *chief Priests* would have laid hold on, and separately interrogated them: And doubtless among so many, some one at least might have been prevailed on to confess an impudent, and unprofitable Falshood. If this could not have been done, yet the most artful Men, much less Persons of such low Birth and Education, could never have so framed their Story,

<sup>c</sup> Acts ii. 32.

but

but that in some Particular they must have contradicted one another, or faltered in some Circumstances, which would have betrayed them. But, instead of making these necessary Enquiries, *Anas and Caiaphas* were contented only to threaten them, and let them go; a Procedure, which can be accounted for only from a secret Self-Conviction, or at least a strong Suspicion, and Fear, that the Fact was true.

<sup>1</sup> It is said indeed, that they could not *punish them, because of the People*. But did this Fear of the People hinder them from making a proper and strict Enquiry? Such an Enquiry, made immediately upon the Spot, could not but have ended in their Detection; and this, as it was the most obvious, so would it have been the most effectual Means of undeceiving the People. Besides, I would ask how the People came to be so engaged in favour of this new Doctrine? The chief Priests could not only with Safety put *Jesus* to Death, but could prevail with the People to join with them in their Cries against him. What was it then which occasioned this great and sudden Change? One might have expected just the Reverse. The People in general expected a temporal *Messiah*: The cruel and ignominious Death therefore, which *Jesus* suffered, must, in all human Appearance,

<sup>1</sup> *A&s iv. 21.*

have put an End to all such Expectations from him, and must for ever have silenced all, who might before have been engaged in his Favour, <sup>a</sup> and who *trusted that it had been by which should have redeemed Israel.* What Cause then can be assigned of so strange an Effect, so directly contrary to what might have been reasonably expected, unless it were the Force of the *Apostles' Evidence*, and the Signs and Wonders, which accompanied their Testimony? And this is the Account which the *Scripture* itself gives of it — *finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the People; for all Men glorified God for that which was done.*

But to proceed with our History. <sup>b</sup> The *Apostles*, not the least discouraged by the Threats of the chief Priests and Elders, returned to their own Company, and reported to them what had passed. They all joined in Prayer to God, acknowledging his Sovereignty and Providence, and praying for his Assistance; beseeching him to enable them to speak his *Word* with all Boldness, and to work Signs and Wonders in the Name of his holy Child Jesus. God by a sensible Token declared his Acceptance of their Prayers: *The Place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with*

<sup>a</sup> See Luk. xxiv. 21.

<sup>b</sup> Act. iv. 23, &c.

Boldness.

*Boldness.* And they all lived in a strict Union of Heart and Affections: The Rich abounded in Charity; neither was there any among them that lacked: For as many as were possessors of Lands, or Houses, sold them, and brought the i rices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' Feet; and Distribution was made unto every Man according as he had need. Amongst the rest Joses, a Levite of the Island of Cyprus, distinguished himself by his Liberality on this Occasion, and was therefore surnamed by the Apostles, *Barnabas*, or the *Son of Consolation*.

<sup>1</sup> But *Ananias and Sapphira* acted more fraudulently: They sold a Possession, and brought only Part of the Price to the Apostles; the rest they kept back. But they could not deceive the *Holy Ghost*. Peter, inspired by the Spirit of God, said unto him, *Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine Heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back Part of the Price of the Land?* Whilst it remained was it not thine own? And after it was sold was it not in thine own Power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine Heart? Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God. From hence it appears that these liberal Contributions were a Matter of voluntary Bounty, not of Necessity. It was not required as a necessary Duty, but recommended as highly expedient on this par-

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 1, &c.

ticular Occasion. Many of the poorer Sort embraced the *Gospel*; these might suffer much Prejudice by adhering to it, and therefore it was proper that some Provision should be made for them. The *Apostles* themselves were poor; and, being called to preach the *Gospel*, could not so well attend to their worldly Affairs. It became therefore the Rich on this Occasion to contribute liberally to the Support of those who wanted; and all good *Christians* chearfully parted with their Goods and Possessions. *Ananias*, hearing *Peter's* just Rebuke, instantly fell down, and gave up the Ghost. And soon after his *Wife Sapphira*, persisting in the same Lie, met with the same Fate. Here then we find another extraordinary Miracle wrought by St. *Peter*. No one probably was privy to this Fraud of *Ananias*, but himself and his *Wife Sapphira*: St. *Peter* therefore shewed that he knew the Secrets of their Hearts, and had Power by his Word to inflict immediate Death on such Offenders. This Miracle was not indeed performed in so publick a Place as the former; but it seems to have been done before many Witnesses. The Busines of receiving and distributing these charitable Contributions was probably transacted in their publick Assemblies: \* Accordingly it is said that great Fear came — ἐφ ὅλη τὴν ἐκκλησίαν — on all the Assembly.

\* Acts v. 11.

The sudden Death of these two Offenders struck a Dread on all who were present, and also *upon as many as heard these things.*<sup>1</sup> The *Apostles* were all (or most of them) there present; and several must have been concerned in carrying out, and burying the Dead Corpses. There could then be no Fraud in this Matter. Had *Peter* and the rest of the *Apostles* been Impostors, they would not have adventured to put these Persons to Death; and had they been mere Enthusiasts, they could not have done it by a Word's speaking. If *Ananias* and *Sapphira* had been put to Death by some wicked Contrivance, and afterwards a false Story set about, many must have been concerned to detect, and revenge it. Such an Attempt, in this infant State of the Church, must have ruined their whole Scheme. These Persons had surely some Friends or Relations, among the Brethren; these would have raised a great Clamour, and made a diligent Enquiry how they came by their Deaths. Had there been any just Suspicions of foul Play, it must have greatly shaken the Faith of their new Converts: Or, could they have had Art enough to have hushed up the Affair among their own People,<sup>m</sup> yet there were among the *Jews* very severe Laws against *Murder*:<sup>n</sup> And even in Cases of uncertain *Mur-*

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 2.      <sup>m</sup> Exod. xxi. 12, &c.      Lev. xxiv. 17.

<sup>n</sup> Deut. xxi. 1, &c.

der, the strictest Search was to be made, and the greatest Care was to be taken, to *put away the Guilt of innocent Blood from among them*. *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were Persons of some Substance; they had doubtless Heirs and Relations, who were concerned in Interest and Honour, \* and empowered by Law, to avenge their Blood. If the Hand of *God* had not been notoriously visible in the Death of these unhappy Persons, Complaints would have been made to the *Rulers* and *Elders*: Nay, they themselves, who were greatly incensed at the bold Proceedings of these *Apostles*, and the great Success they met with, would doubtless have laid hold of these *Apostles*, and put the Laws in Execution against them, if they had had any Shadow of Proof against them: And yet they were never called in Question for this Fact, nor was it ever laid to their Charge either now or afterwards. Nay, when soon afterwards they laid hold of them, and would willingly have put them to Death, they could neither find this nor any other Cause of Accusation against them. In short, this Death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* was either a Murder, or a Miracle. If the former, the *Apostles*, in the present Circumstances, could not possibly have escaped unpunished: If the latter, then *God* gave his Attestation to the Truth of

\* See Num. xxxv. 16, &c.

their Doctrine. This Event was certainly most unfavourable, if the *Apostles* desired a Multitude of Converts, and a general Reception of their Doctrine. <sup>p</sup> We read that *great Fear came upon as many as heard these things: And that of the rest no Man durst join himself to them.* This Act of Severity struck a Terror on Men's Minds: Many who would have been otherwise willing to join their Party, and were yet unwilling to quit their Vices, or part with their Possessions, and were afraid to profess a Religion which admitted of no Hypocrites. And this is one main Reason why the rich and the great stood out against Conviction, and would not embrace a Religion so inconsistent with their worldly Interests.

<sup>q</sup> But notwithstanding this *the People magnified them.* They made many real, and sincere Converts; and *Believers were the more added to the Lord, Multitudes both of Men and Women.* <sup>r</sup> The *Apostles* no way intimidated by the Threatenings of the *chief Priests and Rulers*, continued to work Miracles, and preach the Word, publickly among the People. They appeared openly as before, *in Solomon's Porch*, where the People and the Priests assembled daily for the divine Worship; and performed Miracles in the publick Streets, in a more open and extraordinary Manner, than ever their

<sup>p</sup> Acts v. 11, 13.

<sup>q</sup> v. 13, 14.

<sup>r</sup> v. 12, &c.

Master had done before them. They brought forth the Sick into the Streets, and laid them on Beds and Couches, that at the least the Shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a Multitude out of the Cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing forth sick Folks, and them which were vexed with unclean Spirits; and they were healed every one.

\* These bold Proceedings again provoked the Indignation of the *High-Priest*, and all those that were with him. They were it seems of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, : and could not bear to hear their own Tenets called in Question, and the *Doctrine of the Resurrection* preached. They thought also that their Credit and Interest was attacked, " and that the Apostles intended to bring this Man's Blood upon them, and stir up the People against them for shedding innocent Blood, and putting to Death the Holy One, and the Just. They therefore laid Hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common Prison. But God sent his Angel, who by Night miraculously opened the Prison-Doors, and brought them forth, and commanded them to go, and speak again in the Temple to the People. Next Morning, when the Council sent for them, they found the Prison shut with all Safety, and the Keepers standing without before the Doors, but no Man within. The Apostles

<sup>s</sup> Acts v. 17, &c.

<sup>t</sup> iv. 2.      <sup>u</sup> v. 28.

were

were not there, but standing in the Temple, and teaching the People. They sent therefore their Officers, who were afraid to use Violence, lest the People should have stoned them. But the Apostles voluntarily attended them without any Violence, and behaved before the Council with the same Confidence, and Intrepidity, as before. The High-Priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you, that you should not teach in this Name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your Doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's Blood upon us. Then Peter, and the other Apostles, answered, and said, We ought to obey God rather than Men. The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a Tree. Him hath God exalted with his Right Hand, to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins. And we are his Witnesses of these Things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. This bold Speech, against which they could say nothing, highly exasperated them. At first they took Counsel to slay them. But one wiser than the rest, named Gamaliel, advised them to refrain from these Men, and let them alone. He observed that others before had pretended to a divine Commission, and that their Pretensions had come to nought; and he argued that, if this Counsel, or this Work were of Men, it would meet with no better Success, but that, if it were of God, it would be in vain to attempt to overthrow

overthrow it, for this would be to fight against God. To this good Advice they submitted ; and when they had called the *Apostles*, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the Name of Jesus, and let them go. They departed, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for the Name of Christ. And they continued to " teach, and declare the joyful Tidings that Jesus was the Christ with the same Openness, and Freedom, as before, frequenting the Temple \* every Day, and teaching the same Doctrine in their Assemblies \* at Home.

Here again we find the strongest Marks of Sincerity on the Side of the *Apostles*, and of Self-Conviction on the Side of the Jews. Had the *Apostles* been convicted, or suspected of any Fraud, would any Man of common Sense have given this Advice which *Gamaliel* here gives ? Or would the Council have paid the least Regard to this Advice ? The *Apostles* insist on plain Facts ; the Resurrection of Jesus, to which they bear Witness ; and the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred on those, who embraced the Christian faith. If these Facts had been false, the Falshood of them might have been easily detected ; if any Cheat had been discovered, or suspected in these Wonders, which they pretended to work ; if there had been any reasonable Ground to imagine that the

\* διδάσκοντες καὶ εὐαγγελίζοντες Ἰησοῦ τὸν Χριστόν.  
μετέπειτα. γενέσις.

\* πάντων

Resur-

Resurrection was a Forgery, *Gamaliel* would never have supposed that this Work might possibly be of God, nor would the others have admitted of such a Supposition, or listened to it with Patience.—*If this Counsel be of God*—the Supposition implies at least a Suspicion that it might be of God, which Suspicion could never have taken Place, if they had had any Proof of Fraud against the *Apostles*. Since then they all hearkened to this Advice, and dismissed the *Apostles* with only Threats, and Chastisement, this is a plain Argument that they could neither prove any Fraud against them, nor hoped to discover any. We need then desire no other Proof of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, than this plain Narrative of the Behaviour of the *Apostles*, and *Jews*, on the first Publication of the *Gospel*, contained in the five first Chapters of this Book. If we have here a faithful Account of these Transactions, we may from thence undoubtedy infer, that our Religion is of God.

But how are we sure that we have here such a faithful Account? May not these things be falsely, or partially, represented? Let us then enquire by whom, and when, this History was written.

\* The Author in the Beginning refers to the *former Treatise* which he had made, and addresses this his second Treatise to the same Person. But this former Treatise is the Gospel, which we have un-

\* Acts i. 1.

der

der the Name of St. *Luke*, <sup>a</sup> who was the Companion of St. *Paul* in his Travels. And to this St. *Luke* both this *Gospel*, and this History of the *Acts of the Apostles* have been constantly ascribed from the Times of the *Apostles* to these Days. <sup>b</sup> They are quoted, and alluded to, by the most ancient *Christian* Writers; and looked upon as sacred Writings, and appealed to as of undoubted Authority. The *Gospels* were publickly read in the *Christian Churches* as early as the Days of *Justin Martyr*<sup>c</sup>, that is, about 100 Years after our *Lord's Ascension*. <sup>d</sup> *Irenæus* who flourished about A.D. 180, affirms, and proves at large, that there were four *Gospels*, written by *Mattbew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*: <sup>e</sup> He testifies that St. *Luke* was the Author of this History of the *Acts of the Apostles*: <sup>f</sup> He appeals to it as of undoubted Authority, and makes large Quotations from it: In particular he has quoted great Part of these five <sup>g</sup> first Chapters; and his Citations agree in Substance, and very nearly in Words with our present Copies. It is therefore certain that this History was written by St. *Luke*, and consequently soon after the Facts here recorded are supposed to have happened. We have as good, nay much better Proof of the

<sup>a</sup> See 2 Cor. viii. 18. Col. iv. 14. <sup>2</sup> Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>b</sup> See Lardner's Cred. of Gosp. Hist. <sup>c</sup> Apol. ii. p. 98.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. iii. Cap. 11. <sup>e</sup> Ibid. Cap. 14. <sup>f</sup> Cap. 12.

<sup>g</sup> Cap. 12.

Genuineness of these, and most other Books of the *New Testament*, than of any other ancient Writing whatsoever. And as this Book ends with the Arrival of St. *Paul* at *Rome*, we may from thence probably conclude that it was written at, or soon after that Time, that is <sup>b</sup> about thirty Years after the first Publication of the *Gospel* here recorded with all it's Circumstances.

But how are we sure that St. *Luke* himself did not falsify? Might not he be prejudiced in favour of the Doctrine he had embraced, and give us a partial Account of what passed on this Occasion? But his Account is confirmed by Facts. It is evident from History that about this Time *Christianity* was propagated in the World, and that it *mightily grew and prevailed*. We find, in the Ages immediately following, *Christians* in all Parts of the then known World. But could this have possibly happened, if the Account here given had been in the whole, or in any material Part of it, false? What induced such Numbers, what induced St. *Luke* himself, to become a *Christian*? Let us consider the thing a little. Here is one of the first *Christians*, who could have no other Motive to embrace *Christianity*, but only his Persuasion of the Truth of it, who publishes an Account of a wonderful Miracle wrought before *Multitudes* of People assembled from every Nation

<sup>b</sup> See Ulter's Chronol.

under Heaven. He tells us, that the *Apostles bore Witness openly to our Lord's Resurrection*; that they performed many *Miracles* publickly, and were convened before the *Rulers of Israel*, where they persisted in their Testimony; that their Adversaries though filled with Indignation could say nothing against them, nor deny the Truth of the Miracles wrought by them; and that they were forced at last unwillingly to dismiss them. He names Time, and Place, Circumstances, and Persons. And this Account he publishes a few Years after these Facts are supposed to have happened, when many of the Persons, who were then present at *Jerusalem*, must have been living; adding besides an Account of many other remarkable Facts and Miracles, from that Time to the Time in which he wrote. And this his History is received as authentick by all *Christians*, and appealed to in the Ages immediately following, as of undoubted Authority. The Religion, of the Promulgation of which he here gives us an Account, contradicted the religious Notions both of *Jews*, and *Greeks*; and accordingly met with strong Opposition from both. If then St. *Luke* had falsified in these Accounts, they would doubtless have thought themselves concerned to detect, and expose the Forgery; and doubtless had it in their Power so to do. If no such Miracles had been wrought, and no such Examination of the *Apostles before the Council* had ever

ever passed ; or, if the Substance, and Event of it had been quite different from what is here related, it had been easy to have brought full Testimony of this. Nor can we suppose that either the Apostles, or their Religion, could have gained any Credit in the World, after they had been convicted of such a notorious Falsification. And had such a Conviction been publickly attested, and recorded, it could never have been concealed, or suppressed. The *Jews*, and other Enemies of *Christianity*, would have perpetually objected it in Evidence against us. Instead of this we find not the least Mention, or Footsteps of any Confutation of the *Apostle's* Testimony : Not a single Writer, as far as we can learn, ever offered to disprove, or deny, these Facts : Not a Word can be found in *Josephus*, or any *Jewish* Author, in Opposition to these publick Accounts of such amazing Miracles wrought in their own Country.

But there remains still one plausible Objection behind. It may be, and has been said, that, if such Miracles as these had been really wrought, they must have convinced all who saw them ; and yet we find the *Jewish Priests* and *Rulers* still remained incredulous. Since therefore the natural and necessary Effect did not follow, may we not justly question the Reality of the supposed Cause. If we argue from the Success of the *Gospel*, and infer that these Miracles were really wrought,

wrought, because no small Number were converted by them, will not the Argument hold as strong, or rather much stronger, the other Way, that no such Miracles were wrought, because far the greater Part of the *Jews*, and those of higher Rank and Credit, still continued Unbelievers? <sup>i</sup> But I apprehend the Case to be very different. In the first Case we must suppose an Effect without any Cause whatsoever capable of producing it; in the other Case, it is true indeed that the Cause failed of producing its proper Effect; but at the same Time we see powerful Obstructions in the Way. The Multitudes, who believed the *Gospel*, the *Apostles*, who bore *Witness to our Lord's Resurrection* and Miracles, St. *Luke* himself, who has recorded these Transactions, could have no other Motive for becoming *Christians*, but their full Persuasion of the Truth of these Facts. If they knew these Facts to be false, (and they could not but know whether they were false, or true), they must have acted without any Cause, Ground, or Motive of Action, and must have run contrary to all the known Principles of Human Nature. On the other Hand, though the Incredulity of the *Jews* may appear very strange, yet we know they laboured under strong national Prejudices. And what did they disbelieve? I do not find

<sup>i</sup> See Christians Faith a Rational Assent, Pt. 2. p. 152, &c.  
Douglas's Criterion, p. 332, &c.

that

find that they denied the Truth of these Facts ; no, <sup>k</sup> *they could not deny but that notable Miracles were indeed done by the Apostles* : But they denied the Consequence drawn from them. Now, though Miracles are a striking and alarming Proof of the divine Interposition, yet it does not follow that they must necessarily convince every one, who sees them, of the Truth of the Religion in Attestation of which they are wrought. The same Evidence will operate differently upon different Persons. Men are very unwilling to believe what interferes with their Prejudices, or Interests ; and will often in this Case stand out against the strongest Conviction. And this was the very Case of the unbelieving Jews. They were biased by Education, Custom, and Interest : They were bred up in the Belief of a Religion well attested, and supported by Miracles : <sup>l</sup> *They were exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of their Fathers* ; <sup>m</sup> and they thought that *Jesus of Nazareth came to destroy their Law, and their Temple, and to change the Customs, which Moses delivered them*. Their Power, Credit, and Authority were attacked ; <sup>n</sup> and they were accused of shedding innocent Blood, and crucifying *their Lord and Christ*. <sup>o</sup> The News therefore of his Resurrection *cut them to the Heart* ; nor is it any Wonder that they were averse to believe

<sup>k</sup> Acts iv. 16.

<sup>l</sup> Gal. i. 14.

<sup>m</sup> Acts vi. 14.

<sup>n</sup> Acts ii. 36. iii. 14. v. 28.

<sup>o</sup> Acts v. 33.

what thwarted their Interest, struck at their Prejudices, and combated all the Passions of Human Nature. Men in these Circumstances will find Means of avoiding Conviction, and invent some Way or other of explaining away, or stifling the Force of the strongest Evidence. In those Days Opinions seem to have prevailed of the Force of *Magick*, and the great Power of *Dæmons*, and *evil Spirits*. By these, or some such Means, they might account for these wonderful Works. <sup>p</sup> Thus we find in Fact that the Pharisees ascribed our *Saviour's* Miracles to *Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*. <sup>q</sup> And we find that in after Ages the Enemies of Christianity pretended that they were wrought by the Art of *Magick*. Under these Circumstances even honest and sincere Men might be so blinded by their Prejudices, as not to see the Light, which shone round about them. This was the Case of St. Paul, <sup>r</sup> who was *exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of his Fathers*, and therefore *verily thought with himself that he ought to oppose the Name of Jesus, and persecute his Church*. How much more then must Men attached to this World, wedded to their own Interests, and given up to their own Lusts and Passions, be unwilling to

<sup>p</sup> Matt. ix. 34. xii. 24. <sup>q</sup> See Arnob. Lib. i. p. 36. Ed. Hannov. 1603. Laclant. Instit. L. iv. c. 15. L. v. c. 3. Orig. adv. Cels. Lib. i. p. 22, 30, 53. Euseb. Demonst. Evang. Lib. iii. c. 6. <sup>r</sup> Gal. i. 13, 14. Acts xxvi. 9.

embrace

embrace the pure and holy Religion of *Christ*.

\* We are assured by the Scriptures, and by their own History, that the *Jews* were at that Time *an evil and adulterous Generation*; and therefore it is the less to be wondered at, that they shut their Eyes against the *Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ*.

\* *Why do ye not understand my Speech*, (said our *Saviour* to the *Jews*)? *Even because ye cannot hear my Word*. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do*. There have been always too many in the World, who never entertain one serious Thought of Religion, who are perpetually fluctuating between different Opinions, never in earnest examining into the Truth of any, nor giving themselves the Time, or Trouble to consider the Proofs of Religion. Such Men might see, and wonder at, and for a Time be convinced of the Truth of the *Miracles* wrought by *Christ*, and his *Apostles*: And the next Wind that blew might carry them quite another Way, and dispose them to oppose and persecute them; believing and disbelieving by Turns; <sup>u</sup> one while welcoming *Christ*, with *loud Hosannabs*, <sup>w</sup> and soon after crying—*Crucify him, crucify him*; <sup>x</sup> one while worshipping the *Apostles as Gods*, and immediately after stoning

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xii. 39. Luk. xi. 29. *Joseph. de Bel. Jud. Lib. vii. C. 8. S. 1.* See *Lardner's Credibility L. i. C. 6.* <sup>t</sup> Joh. viii. 43, 44. <sup>u</sup> Matt. xxi. 9. <sup>w</sup> xxvii. 22. Luk. xxiii. 21.

<sup>x</sup> Acts xiv. 11, &c.

them as Malefactors. Such Men might receive the Word with Gladness, magnify the Apostles, glorify God for the Miracles they wrought, and become almost Christians. But when called upon to distribute their Possessions, to bid adieu to their Lusts and Vices, and to continue steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine and Fellowship, from this they might desire to be excused. <sup>1</sup> Thus we find that in our Saviour's Time many among the chief Rulers believed on him; but did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue. <sup>2</sup> And thus, when the Apostles first published the Gospel, no Man could deny the truth of the Miracles wrought by them; the People in general favoured them, but only those that were saved, those who were disposed to eternal Life, made Profession of the Faith. Of the rest durst no Man join himself unto them. The Apostles' Persons they had in Admiration, and acknowledged the Truth of their Miracles; but they durst not openly profess a Religion, which admitted no Hypocrisy, nor suffered it to pass unpunished.

<sup>1</sup> Joh. xii. 42.      <sup>2</sup> Acts iv. 16. 21.    ii. 47.    xiii. 48.  
v. 13.

## C H A P. II.

THE same Conclusions will follow, if we pursue this History still farther, and enquire how the *Gospel* was propagated, and what Reception it met with in the *Gentile* World. *The Chief Priests and Elders* could not disprove the Testimony, which the *Apostles* bore to our *Lord's Resurrection*, <sup>a</sup> and could say nothing against the *Miracles* which they wrought; <sup>b</sup> and therefore they thought it most prudent to chastise them, *and let them go*. But when they found that *they ceased not to teach, and preach Jesus Christ*, <sup>c</sup> and that *the Word of God increased, and the Number of Disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly*, they were again filled with Indignation, and no longer hearkening to this sober Advice, they proceeded to Severities. They accused *Stephen* of speaking *blasphemous Words against Moses, and against God*, and brought him before the *Council*; but without waiting for a judicial Sentence, they tumultuously stoned him to Death. <sup>d</sup> And they proceeded to raise a great Persecution against the *Church* which was at *Jerusalem*.

<sup>a</sup> Acts iv. 14, &c.

<sup>b</sup> v. 40, &c.

<sup>c</sup> vi. 7, &c.

<sup>d</sup> viii. 1.

*Salem.* This, by the wise Appointment of God, fell out to the Furtherance of the Gospel. It caused many of the Brethren to flee from Jerusalem; and by these Means the Gospel was propagated throughout the Regions of Judæa and Samaria. <sup>c</sup> The Christians thus dispersed went every where preaching the Word. Philip went down to the City of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And he wrought many great Miracles among them: Unclean Spirits, crying with a loud Voice, came out of many that were possessed with them, and many taken with Pal-sies, and that were lame, were healed. By these Miracles many were converted, and were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And Peter, and John, being sent from Jerusalem, laid their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, that is, the Power of working Miracles, as appears by the Context, and Comparison with <sup>f</sup> other Places. Peter also wrought Miracles in other Places. <sup>g</sup> He healed a Paralytick at Lydda, who had kept his Bed eight Years: He restored a dead Woman to Life again at Joppa. But hitherto they had not preached the Gospel, but to the Jews only, and Samaritans. <sup>h</sup> The first Step, which led the Way to the Call of the Gentiles, was the Conversion of St. Paul, <sup>i</sup> who was ordained to be a Minister of Jesus

<sup>c</sup> Acts viii. 4, &c.      <sup>f</sup> x. 44. xix. 6.      <sup>g</sup> ix. 32, &c.

<sup>h</sup> ix. 1, &c.      <sup>i</sup> Rom. xv. 16.

*Christ unto the Gentiles.* \* This miraculous *Conversion of St. Paul*, with the Consequences of it, has been fully considered by a masterly Hand, and shewn to be of itself a Demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine Revelation. I proceed to the first *Manifestation of Christ* to the *Gentiles* by the Ministry of St. Peter. <sup>1</sup> We are told that *Cornelius, a Roman Centurion*, was instructed by an *Angel of God*, in a *Vision*, to send for St. Peter, who would tell him what he ought to do. And at the same Time St. Peter was in a *Vision* directed to go with *Cornelius's Messenger*, nothing doubting, and making no Objection to his being of another Nation, or Religion. Peter accordingly went, and preached to him the Doctrine of *Christ*, that *God raised him from the Dead, and had ordained him to be the Judge of Quick and Dead*, and that whosoever believed on him should receive *Remission of Sins*. While he was thus speaking, the *Holy Ghost* fell on all them which heard the *Word*, which enabled them to speak in different Languages. This was a most astonishing Miracle. There could be no Fraud, or Collusion: *Cornelius, and his Friends*, were Strangers to *Peter*, of a different Nation, and Religion: These Men had no Reason to pretend, no Inducement to fancy, that they *speak in an unknown Tongue*. And this wonderful Miracle had

\* Lord Littleton's Letter to Gilbert Webster, Esq.

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 1, &c.

as wonderful an Effect. *Cornelius*, and all who were with him, were converted, and *baptized* into the Profession of the *Christian* Faith.

I shall not now enlarge upon the several Particulars recorded in the Book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, from many of which might be drawn strong Proofs of the Truth of the *Christian* Religion. It may suffice to observe, that <sup>m</sup> when the *Apostles* preached to the *Jews*, they commonly *reasoned with them from their own Scriptures, opening, and alledging, and shewing from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.* But, when they applied to the *Gentiles*, they proved the Truth of their Doctrine by the Testimony of *Miracles*. <sup>n</sup> At *Paphos* St. Paul struck *Elymas the Sorcerer* blind, and thereby converted *Sergius Paulus the Deputy of the Country*. <sup>o</sup> At *Lystra* he healed a Man, who had been a *Cripple from his Mother's Womb*. <sup>p</sup> At *Thyatira* he dispossessed a Woman who had a *Spirit of Divination*. <sup>q</sup> We read *Acts* xiv. 3. that the Lord gave Testimony unto the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by the Hands of *Paul and Barnabas*. <sup>r</sup> And they themselves in the Council at *Jerusalem* declared what Miracles and Wonders God had wrought among the *Gentiles* by them.

<sup>m</sup> See *Acts* xiii. 16. &c. xvii. 2, 3. xviii. 28. xxvi. 22. xxviii. 23.

<sup>n</sup> xiii. 6. &c. <sup>o</sup> xiv. 8. &c. <sup>p</sup> xvi. 16. <sup>q</sup> xiv. 3.

<sup>r</sup> xv. 12.

Again

\* Again we read *Acts* xix. that God wrought special Miracles by the Hands of Paul; so that from his Body were brought unto the Sick, Handkerchiefs, or Aprons, and the Diseases departed from them, and the evil Spirits went out of them. And, when some Jewish Exorcists attempted to cast out evil Spirits by the Name of the Lord Jesus, the evil Spirit answered, and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? † In the next Chapter it is recorded that St. Paul restored a Man to Life who was killed by a Fall. ‡ And afterwards in the Island Melita he shook off a Viper, which fastened on his Hand, and felt no Harm. And in the same Place he healed the Father of Publius, the chief Man of the Island, who lay sick of a Fever, and a bloody Flux, and others also who had Diseases in the Island. \* St. Mark also tells us, that the Lord worked with the Apostles, and confirmed the Word with Signs following: \* And in the Epistle to the Hebrews we are assured, that God bare them Witness with Signs, and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost. † St. Paul also testifies of himself that he had wrought many Signs and Wonders by the Power of the Spirit of God, to make the Gentiles obedient, by Word and Deed. ‡ And again he tells the Corinthians, that the Signs of an Apostle were wrought by him

\* *Acts* xix. 11, &c.      † *xx. 9, &c.*      ‡ *xxviii. 4, &c.*

\* *Mark* xvi. 20.      † *Heb. ii. 4.*      ‡ *Rom. xv. 18, 19.*

‡ *2 Cor. xii. 12.*

among

among them, in Signs, and Wonders, and mighty Deeds. Nor was this Power of working Miracles peculiar only to St. Paul, and the twelve Apostles. Barnabas, who, though called an Apostle, was not of the Number of the Twelve, had (as we have seen) the like Power. <sup>a</sup> Stephen the Deacon did great Wonders and Miracles among the People. <sup>b</sup> Philip, another Deacon, wrought also special Miracles. <sup>c</sup> The Apostles also conferred these Gifts of the Holy Ghost on others by laying on their Hands. <sup>d</sup> On the preaching of St. Peter the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word; and they spake with Tongues, and magnified God. <sup>e</sup> When St. Paul laid his Hands on certain Disciples at Ephesus, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied. <sup>f</sup> On others also, both Men and Women, was conferred the Gift of Prophecy. <sup>g</sup> St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks at large of the spiritual Gifts conferred on some of them, the Gift of Healing, the Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, divers Kinds of Tongues, and the Interpretation of Tongues; and he gives Directions concerning the Use of them. These Miracles thus wrought by the Apostles, and first Christians, were various in their Kind, nor were they confined to any one Place, or Country. They were wrought not only in Jerusalem and Judæa, but in Samaria,

<sup>a</sup> Act vi. 8.    <sup>b</sup> viii. 6, &c.    <sup>c</sup> viii. 17.    <sup>d</sup> x. 44, &c.    <sup>e</sup> xix. 6.    <sup>f</sup> xi. 27. xxi. 9, 10.    <sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. xii. xiv.

*Antioch, Rome, Corinth, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Asia;* and in all Places, where the Apostles preached the Word, <sup>b</sup> their preaching was in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power; <sup>a</sup> not in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and—*iv πληροφορια πολλη—with full Proof.* These Miracles were such as no Power of Man could effect, nor Art counterfeit. To restore Persons who had been *Crip-ples from their Mothers' Womb,* in an Instant, to the Use of their Limbs; to heal the *Palsy,* and other inveterate Diseases, by a Word's speaking, by the Shadow of an Apostle passing by, or by Handkerchiefs, or Aprons, brought from his Body; to cast forth evil Spirits, and cause them to come out of Persons possessed, crying with a loud Voice, and make them own that the Apostles were Servants of the most High God; to speak divers Languages without having ever learnt them; and to raise the Dead to Life again, are such Works, as no Power, or Art of Man can effect. And to communicate the Power of working them to others, is, if may be, still more impracticable. Nor does St. Luke only mention such Miracles in general, but he specifies many particular Instances. He relates the several Circumstances attending them; the Persons on whom, the Persons before whom, the Place where they were wrought. If his Relations were false, their Falshood must have been

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 4.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Thess. i. 5.

notorious

notorious to all Mankind. And that especially as this History was published in the same Age in which these Miracles were wrought. Our Historian St. *Luke* accompanied St. *Paul* in his Travels, was probably an Eye-witness of many of them, and knew the Persons, who were restored, and healed. St. *Paul* also testifies, that he himself, and many other *Christians*, were *Workers of Miracles*. \* In his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* he speaks of *miraculous Gifts* bestowed on several of the Brethren there, particularly *the Gifts of healing, and divers Kinds of Tongues*. <sup>1</sup> Here could be no Room for Fraud, or Enthusiasm. These *Corinthians* could not but know whether they had among them any such *Gifts*, or not: They could not fancy themselves possessed of the *Power of Healing*, if they could heal nobody. They could not imagine they could *speak with divers Tongues*, if they understood only their own Tongue, or only such as they might have learnt. Or, if you could suppose them possessed with such unaccountable Fancies, they must have been undeceived when they came to put these *Gifts* to the Proof. And, if they had among them no such miraculous Powers, they must have regarded the Author of these Epistles, as a Man out of his Senses, instead of revering him as *an Apostle of God*.

\* 1 Cor. xii. 1. &c.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Littleton's Letter to Gilbert West, Esq. p. 92. &c.

Lastly,

Lastly, These *Miracles* could not have been wrought by any Art of *Magick*, or any Power of *evil Spirits*. <sup>m</sup> For it was the avowed Design of the *Gospel* to destroy the *Works* of the *Devil*. <sup>n</sup> It expressly forbids all *Idolatry* and *Worship of False Gods*; <sup>o</sup> all *Witchcraft* and *Sorcery*; <sup>p</sup> and calls upon Men to turn from these *Vanities* to serve the living *God*. And this was the immediate Effect of the *Apostles'* preaching. <sup>q</sup> Many who used curious *Arts*, when converted to the *Christian Faith*, confessed, and shewed their *Deeds*, and brought their *Books*, and burnt them before all Men. It was both the Intention, and Effect of the *Christian Religion* <sup>r</sup> to turn Men from *Darkness* to *Light*, and from the Power of *Satan* unto *God*, <sup>s</sup> and teach them to deny *Ungodliness* and *worldly Lusts*, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present *World*. To suppose then that these *Miracles* were wrought by the Power of *Satan*, or any *evil Spirit*, is to suppose *Satan* to fight against himself, and destroy his own *Kingdom*, *evil Spirits* to teach Men <sup>t</sup> to abhor every thing which is *evil*, and cleave to that which is *good*. It is in short to suppose *evil Spirits* to be *good Spirits*.

But my Purpose leads me chiefly to insist on the surprising Success, which the *Gospel* met with. *Gamaliel* justly argued that, if this *Work* were of

- <sup>m</sup> 1 Joh. iii. 8.                   <sup>n</sup> Matt. iv. 10.                   <sup>o</sup> Acts xvii. 29.
- <sup>1</sup> Cor. x. 14.   <sup>1</sup> Joh. v. 21.   <sup>o</sup> Gal. v. 20.   <sup>p</sup> Acts xiv. 15.
- <sup>1</sup> Thess. i. 9.                   <sup>q</sup> Acts xix. 18, 19.                   <sup>r</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.
- <sup>s</sup> Tit. ii. 12.                   <sup>t</sup> Rom. xii. 9.

*Men it would come to nought.* And therefore since it was not soon overthrown<sup>\*</sup>, but grew and prevailed every where so mightily, and so speedily, we may most assuredly conclude that it was of God. If we consider the Circumstances, under which the *Gospel* was published, it will appear morally impossible that such a Number of all Nations should so readily have embraced it, on any other Supposition, but that of the Truth and Notoriety of the Facts attesting it, and the *Hand of God* supporting and prospering it. Let us again then take our *Bible* in Hand. <sup>w</sup> We have already seen there, that by the wonderful *Miracles* wrought at *Jerusalem* five Thousand Souls became Converts to the *Christian* Faith. This, as I observed before, was a plain Proof of the Reality, and Notoriety of the *Miracles*; nor could any Thing less than the Force of Truth have had so wonderful an Effect. The Preachers of the *Gospel* had still greater Difficulties to encounter, when they left their own Country. <sup>x</sup> We read that, *a great Persecution arising against the Church at Jerusalem, the Christians were scattered abroad*; that Philip went down to the City of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the People with one Accord gave heed unto those Things which Philip spake. And the Reason is given why they gave such heed—They heard and saw the *Miracles* which he did. This, and this

\* Acts xix. 20.

w iv. 4.

x viii. 1, &c.

alone,

alone, will account for their ready Reception of him. There was an inveterate Enmity, we know, between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*,<sup>1</sup> They had no *Dealings with each other*, and would scarcely vouchsafe each other the common Offices of Humanity. What then could induce *Philip* to preach *Christ* to this People? And what Hope could he have to meet with Success amongst them? On the other Hand, what could move the *Samaritans* to give heed to him with one Accord? *Philip* was a *Jew*: He preached to them a *Saviour*, whose supposed Parents lived at *Nazareth*, who himself lived, and died, in *Judæa*, and had lately been put to an ignominious Death at *Jerusalem*. Can we suppose that these People would have given any Attention to such a *Preacher* of such a *Saviour*, if they had not been convinced by the *Signs and Miracles*, which he wrought amongst them? And, if these *Miracles* were really wrought, the *Doctrine* which he taught in the Name of *God*, must be true.

<sup>2</sup> However, these *Samaritans* were in expectation of a *Messiah*: They must have heard of the *Miracles* of *Jesus*, and he had been in Person among them. But how came the *Gospel* to be received among the *Gentiles*? The *Scriptures* already cited will inform us. <sup>3</sup> *Cornelius*, a *Roman Centurion*, was in a *Vision* directed to send for St.

<sup>1</sup> Joh. iv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Joh. iv. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Acts x.

*Peter*;

Peter ; and St. Peter was in a like *Vision* instructed to attend him ; and on the *Apostle's* preaching *the Holy Ghost* fell on all who heard him. And if so, we have no Reason to wonder that the Word was so readily received. But on any other Supposition this is wholly unaccountable. The Jews had a great Aversion to the *Gentiles*. They thought themselves the only *People of God*, and expected a temporal *Messiah*, who should free them from the *Roman Yoke*, and give them Rule over the *Gentiles*. Nor were the *Apostles* free from the Prejudices of their Countrymen : <sup>b</sup> But just before our *Lord's Ascension* they asked him, saying, *Lord, wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Israel ?* <sup>c</sup> Nay, they thought it unlawful to converse freely, or eat with Persons uncircumcised. And not only the *Scriptures*, but heathen Writers, affirm the same. *Adversus omnes alios hostile odium*—says the *Roman Historian*, speaking of the Jews. And on the other Hand, the *Heathens* held the Jews in great Contempt. Accordingly, <sup>d</sup> the *Christians*, on their first Dispersion, preached the *Word* to none but unto the Jews only. What then could move Persons labouring under these Prejudices to attempt the Conversion of the *Gentiles* ? and what Hopes could they entertain of succeeding in the Attempt ? Nothing less than a particular Command of God could induce, or encourage, them to

<sup>b</sup> Acts i. 6.<sup>c</sup> x. 28. xi. 3.<sup>d</sup> xi. 19.

set

set about such a Work. Or, if we could suppose the *Apostles* hardy enough to undertake it, what could induce the *Gentiles* to give any Credit to them? The *Apostles* were most of them Persons of low Birth, and mean Education<sup>c</sup>, *unlearned and ignorant Men*. St. *Paul* indeed wanted neither Learning, nor Eloquence; <sup>f</sup> but he too was bred up to a mean Occupation; and his Testimony, without the Divine Attestation, could have had no Weight with Persons to whom he was an utter Stranger. They were all *Jews*; a People against which most other Nations were strongly prejudiced.  
<sup>e</sup> As, for their Aversion to Idolatry, and irreconcileable Separation from all other Religions, they were accused of hating Mankind, so were they also hated of all other Nations; nor were they hated only, but also despised. And what was it that they preached? <sup>b</sup> *Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling Block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness*. To the *Jews* they could alledge, that <sup>i</sup> *Jesus of Nazareth was a Man approved among them by Miracles, and Wonders*, and that *God had raised him from the Dead*; and of this they could give such Evidence, as the *Jews* could neither disprove, nor gainsay. But the *Gentiles* had never heard of *Jesus*, or his *Miracles, or Crucifixion*. The Doctrine of our Lord's Resur-

<sup>c</sup> *Acts iv. 13.*

<sup>f</sup> *xviii. 3.*

<sup>g</sup> See *Lord Littleton's Letter to Gilbert West, Esq. p. 47, &c.*

<sup>h</sup> *1 Cor. i. 23.*

<sup>i</sup> *Acts ii. 22.*

*re*ction must have appeared to them an idle Tale, if it had been supported by no other Proof than the bare Assertion of such Men as these.

The Excellency of the Doctrines taught by the *Christian* Religion did indeed carry with it a strong Proof of its Truth, and might have its proper Weight with wise and good Men. But the *Apostles* preached the *Gospel*, as the *Word of God*: \* *And their Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.* They did not prove the Truth of their Doctrines by philosophical Reasoning, or Arguments drawn from the Nature of Things: They alledged the Authority of *God*, <sup>1</sup> who *bare them Witness with Signs, and Wonders, and divers Miracles.* And the Doctrines, which they taught, however excellent, and worthy of *God*, yet combated the popular Opinions, and preconceived Notions of those to whom they preached. The whole World was *given to Idolatry*, and strongly attached to the Heathen Rites, which dazzled their Senses by magnificent Shew, and allured them by Pleasures, and those often of a very impure and immoral Nature. The *Apostles* called upon them to put away these *Idols*, to abolish these Rites, to forsake all their many false *Gods*, <sup>m</sup> and to worship *one only God*, <sup>n</sup> and to worship him in *Spirit, and in Truth.* <sup>o</sup> It must there-

\* 1 Cor. ii. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 4.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 4, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Joh. iv. 24.

<sup>o</sup> Acts xix. 26.

fore move their Indignation to see *their Gods set at nought, and their Deities despised, whom all the World worshipped*. And this must particularly alarm the *Priests*, and many others, who by this *Craft had their Wealth*. And the *Pagan Religion* was so interwoven in all *Heathen Countries* with the civil Constitutions of the State, that the Civil Magistrate could not but take Offence at the preaching of a new Religion so opposite to the old Establishment. <sup>p</sup> *These Men have turned the World upside down, do contrary to the Decrees of Cæsar, and teach Customs which are not lawful for us to receive, were Charges which could not but alarm, and trouble the Heathen Magistrates, and Rulers.*

One might think indeed, that so pure and excellent a Religion should have met with a favourable Reception, among the wise Men, and Philosophers. <sup>q</sup> *But they had Prejudices of their own still more repugnant to the Doctrines of the Gospel than those of the Vulgar, and more deeply rooted, and obstinately fixed in their Minds.* Their Pride also was a most invincible Obstacle, which stopped their Ears against Teachers, who came from *Judea*, and preached to them *Christ crucified*, and that *not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*, but in great Plainness, and Simplicity of Speech. The Doctrine of *a crucified Saviour*, and of *Repentance, and Remission of Sins*, could not but appear *Foolishness* to those, who

<sup>p</sup> Acts xvi. 21, xvii. 6, &c.

<sup>q</sup> See Lord Littleton's Letter to Gilbert West, Esq. p. 52, &c.

thought themselves so wise, and so perfect, as to want no *Redeemer*, and need no *Repentance*. The *Christian Religion* was calculated to overturn their several Systems, set at nought their Learning, mortify their Pride, and blast their Credit. And accordingly we find, they were always its most bitter, and most implacable Enemies.

The *Christian Religion* sets forth indeed *great and precious Promises*, such as the Pardon of all Sins, and everlasting Life. And had the *Apostles* only bidden their Disciples *wash and be clean*; had they promised unconditional Forgiveness of Sins to all who were *baptized in the Name of Christ*, this might have been a palatable Doctrine, and acceptable to wicked and weak Men. But they always in their Doctrine joined Repentance with Remission of Sins. *Repent*, (said St. Peter), *and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the Remission of Sins*. And again—*Repent ye, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*. The same St. Peter taught his Disciples, that *Baptism doth now save us; not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God*. To the same Purpose speaks St. Paul—*Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity*. *Eternal Life* is promised in the *Gospel*; but to whom is it promised? *To them only who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for the Prize*. But *Tribulation and*

<sup>†</sup> Acts ii. 38.

<sup>‡</sup> iii. 19.

<sup>†</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 21.

<sup>‡</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 19.

<sup>¶</sup> Rom. ii. 7, &c.

*Anguish is denounced upon every Soul of Man that doeth Evil.* \* The Apostle teaches us, that we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad. These Terrors of the Lord must tend, not to captivate, but to alienate the Minds of profligate and careless Sinners. The Doctrines of the Gospel, though most pure, and excellent, were no way calculated to gain the Favour of the Rich, or Great, to please the Vulgar, to allure the Wicked, or the Weak, or to flatter the Vanity of the Philosopher. On the contrary, they had the Policy and Power of the Magistrate, the Prejudices and Prepossessions of the Vulgar, the Interests and Credit of the Priests, and the Wisdom and Pride of the Philosophers to contend with. Under all these Disadvantages the Apostles could scarcely have hoped to make any Converts, without the extraordinary Assistance, and Attestation of God. If this Counsel, or Work, had been of Men, it must soon have come to nought. And yet we find Multitudes of Converts flocking in to the Apostles in all Parts of the World. † We read in the History of the *Acts of the Apostles*, that the Gospel, soon after its first Publication, was preached at Phœnicie, Cyprus, and Antioch, and that a great Number believed, and turned unto the Lord; that St. Paul went about preaching the Word in Syria, and <sup>‡</sup> Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia,

\* 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Acts xi. 19, 21.

‡ xiii. 4, &amp;c.

<sup>a</sup> *Lycaonia, b Cilicia, c Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, d Macedonia,* and so on to *Athens, and e Corinth, and f round about to Illyricum, and afterwards to Rome.* And in most of these Places he met with surprizing Success. <sup>g</sup> *The Word of the Lord grew, and multiplied every where; h and the Churches increased in Number daily.* <sup>i</sup> *At Iconium, some of the Jews, and a great Multitude of the Greeks, believed.* <sup>k</sup> *At Thessalonica, and Berea, a great Multitude of the devout Greeks believed, and of honourable Women not a few.* <sup>l</sup> *At Athens some clave unto him, and believed; m and at Corinth many hearing, believed, and were baptized.* <sup>n</sup> *St. Paul continued at Ephesus for the Space of two Years, so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special Miracles by his Hands; and Fear fell upon all Men, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; and the Word of God grew mightily, and prevailed.* And what St. Luke here tells us appears by History to be plain and undoubted Matter of Fact. St. Paul wrote Epistles to all the Saints at *Rome, to the Churches at Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, and Thessalonica, and to all the the Saints at Philippi, with the Bishops, and Deacons,* which he neither would, nor could have done, if

- <sup>a</sup> *Acts xiv. 6, &c.*   <sup>b</sup> *xv. 41.*   <sup>c</sup> *xvi. 6, &c.*   <sup>d</sup> *xvii. 1, &c.*
- <sup>e</sup> *xviii. 1, &c.*   <sup>f</sup> *Rom. xv. 19.*   <sup>g</sup> *Acts xii. 24.*   <sup>h</sup> *xvi. 5.*
- <sup>i</sup> *xiv. 1.*   <sup>k</sup> *xvii. 11, 12.*   <sup>l</sup> *xvii. 34.*   <sup>m</sup> *xviii. 8.*
- <sup>n</sup> *xix. 10, &c.*

there

there had not been a considerable Number of *Christians* in all these Places. He placed *Timothy* at *Ephesus*; and he gives him Directions about the Government of the Church there. <sup>o</sup> And he left *Titus* in *Crete*, with Commission to set in Order the Things that were wanting, and ordain Elders in every City. <sup>p</sup> St. Peter directs <sup>q</sup> his Epistle to the Elect scattered throughout *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*. We learn also from Ecclesiastical History, that soon after the first preaching of the *Gospel*, Churches were established, and Bishops settled, every where. The Names of many of them are recorded. There were also *Christian* Writers, many of whose Works are still extant, in all Parts of the World, *Antioch, Smyrna, Sardes, Edeffa, Athens, Corinth, Alexandria, Carthage, Rome, and Gaul*.

And this wonderful and speedy Propagation of the *Gospel* throughout the World, is attested by the joint Consent of the most early *Christian* Writers. <sup>r</sup> Clemens, the Fellow-Labourer of St. Paul, <sup>s</sup> testifies

<sup>o</sup> Tit. i. 5.      <sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

<sup>q</sup> This Epistle is dated from *Babylon*, by which many think that *Rome* is meant. It seems to me improbable, that St. Peter should use such a fictitious Name, not applied (as far as I can find) to *Rome* till the Time that St. John wrote his *Revelations*. I shoud rather think that St. Peter wrote from *Babylon* in *Egypt*. See Pearson Op. Posth. Dissert. i. Cap. viii.

<sup>r</sup> Phil. iv. 3. <sup>s</sup> Κῆρυξ γενόμφος ἐν τῇ ἀστολῇ, καὶ σὺ τῇ δύσι, διηγοσύνῃ διδαχέσσοντα τὸ κοσμίον, καὶ εἰτὶ τὸ πλευτὸν τὸ δύσιν εἰδόντων. Epist. i. ad. Corinth. Sect. 5.

that

that this *Apostle* preached both in the *East*, and *West*, taught the whole *World Righteousness*, and travelled to the utmost Part of the *West*. <sup>1</sup> *Justin Martyr*, who flourished in the second Century, says, that in his Time there was no Part of Mankind, whether *Barbarians*, or *Greeks*, among whom Prayers, and Thanksgivings, were not offered to the Creator of the *World*, by the Name of the crucified *Jesus*. <sup>2</sup> *Irenæus*, who was in the same Century Bishop of *Lyons* in *Gaul*, assures us, that the *Gospel* was preached through the whole *World*, to the extreme Parts of the *Earth*, by the *Apostles*, and their Disciples; <sup>3</sup> and that there were in his Time Churches founded in *Germany*, *Spain*, *Gaul*, and in the *East*, *Egypt*, and *Libya*.

\* To these full Testimonies might be added farther Proofs from most of the Primitive Writers. It may be sufficient to subjoin two Citations from Heathen Authors. The first shall be from *Tacitus*,

<sup>1</sup> Οὐδὲ ἡ γῆ ὅλη ἵστι τὸ γένος ἀπερίπτωτο, εἴπει Ἐλένης, εἴπει Βαρζεδών,  
—ινοῖς μὴ διὰ τῆς ὁμοάτου θεού παρθεῖστος Ἰησοῦς εὐχαῖς καὶ εὐχαριστίαις τῷ  
πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γινονται. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesia per universum Orbem usque ad fines terræ semi-nata, & ab Apostolis, & Discipulis eorum accepit fidem. Adv. Hæres. Lib. i. C. 2.      <sup>3</sup> Ib. C. 4.

<sup>4</sup> See *Euseb.* Hist. Eccl. L. ii. C. 3. *Demonst.* Evang. L. iii. C. 5. *Bardeian.* Syr. ap *Euseb.* Praepar. Evang. L. vi. C. 10. *Tertull.* Adv. Jud. C. vii. *Apolog.* C. i. S. xxxvii. *Origen* contr. *Cels.* L. i. p. 21, 22.—L. ii. p. 124. *Arnob.* L. iii. p. 59, 65. *Laetant.* Institut. L. v. C. 13. *Julian.* Imp. ap. *Cyrill.* L. x.

who gives us an Account of the Persecution of the Christians by Nero. <sup>1</sup> He says, that *this mischievous Superstition* (as he calls the Christian Religion) *not only spread itself through Judea, but as far as Rome*, and that *a great Multitude of Christians were seized, and put to Death by the Emperor*. Here then is a most incontestable Proof of the wonderful Propagation of Christianity. In the Time of Nero, scarcely above thirty Years from the first Publication of the Gospel at Jerusalem, there were not only *a great Multitude at Rome*, who embraced the Christian Religion, but *a large Number, who were arraigned, and condemned to Death for the Profession of it*. But most strong is the Testimony of Pliny in his Epistle to Trajan. <sup>2</sup> We learn from thence, that when he was Proconsul in Bitynia and Pontus, Christians abounded there; that *many had on this Account been informed against*; that he had made diligent Enquiry, and that by Torture, into the Nature of the Charge against them, but *could not discover any Crime that they were guilty of, but only what he calls an evil and excessive Superstition*. And he says, that he thought it necessary to consult the Emperor on this Occasion, chiefly on Account of the Number of Persons called in Question; for many of every Age, and Rank, and of both Sexes, were, and would be in Danger; the Contagion having spread itself, not only in the Cities, but in the Villages, and Country. The

<sup>1</sup> Annal. Lib. xv. p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. x. Epist. 97.

*Temples were almost deserted, the sacred Rites discontinued, and the Victims met with but few Purchasers. Thus mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed, in a Province far distant from *Judea*, within seventy Years after its first Promulgation.*

Thus have we seen, that immediately after our *Lord's Resurrection, and Ascension*, <sup>a</sup> the Apostles went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following; that considering the many, and unsurmountable Disadvantages, which they laboured under, the Nature of the Word preached, the Condition of the Preachers, the strong Prejudices, and Prepossessions of the *Heathen* World, to whom they preached, it was morally impossible it could have met with Success without the Divine Assistance, and Attestation. And yet it has appeared from undoubted Authority, that *it grew and prevailed every where*; that in the Compass of a few Years the *Gospel* was published among all Nations, and, <sup>b</sup> as the *Prophet* had foretold, *the Name of Christ was great among the Gentiles, from the rising of the Sun even unto the going down of the same.*

<sup>a</sup> Mar. xvi. 20.

<sup>b</sup> Mal. i. 11,

A

C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

O X F O R D,

IN THE YEAR 1771.

H h 2



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REVEREND BRETHREN,

**I**T has not been my Custom, nor that of my Predecessors, to detain you with a Charge on every Visitation. You stand not, I think, in need of such frequent Admonitions, either to instruct you in your Duty, or to enforce on you the Practice of it. And it may perhaps seem less necessary now, than ever, to give myself, and you, this Trouble, when you have so lately received such an excellent Charge from your worthy Diocesan. It might be sufficient to exhort you seriously to call to Mind the good Instructions, which you then received, and diligently to follow them.

But an Attempt lately set on foot, and carried on with great Zeal, to set aside all *Subscription* to our *Articles* and *Liturgy*, has made me think it incumbent on me to deliver to you my Sentiments on this Head. I shall confine myself to what chiefly concerns us of the *Clergy*, the Reasonableness of requiring *Subscription to Articles of Religion* from Persons to be admitted to *holy Orders*, or to *a Cure of Souls*.

And I hope I need not employ many Words to convince you that Persons, who are to be Teachers of others, should be themselves *sound in the Faith*, and should give to those, who ordain, and appoint them, some Proof and Assurance, that they are so. <sup>a</sup> St. Paul directs Timothy to *commit those things which he had heard to faithful Men, who should be able to teach others also;* <sup>b</sup> and to ordain such Deacons only, as *hold the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience.* <sup>c</sup> He commissions Titus to *ordain such Elders in every City, as hold fast the faithful Word, as they had been taught, that they might be able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the Gainsayers.* And this is agreeable to Reason, as well as Scripture. In Affairs of less Concern and Importance, would you employ a Man to teach others, who did not understand, or who misunderstood the things he was to teach? *Soundness of Doctrine* is indeed the principal thing to be required in a *Christian Teacher.* Ignorant Persons are certainly no way qualified to be Teachers. But Error is worse than Ignorance; a blind Guide being more eligible than a self-sufficient one, who would purposely carry you the wrong Way. Nor does a bad Life so immediately affect the People under the Teacher's Care, as erroneous Principles do. The People may receive Profit from the good Doctrine of a wicked Minister,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 9.

<sup>c</sup> Tit. i. 9.

and

and need not copy after his bad Example. But the Appointment of erroneous, and false Teachers is inconsistent with the very End and Design of such Appointment, which is to instruct the People in the Truth, and (as the *Apostle* speaks) *by sound Doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the Gainsayers.*

Accordingly, in all Ages of the Church great Care has been taken to enquire into the religious Principles of Persons to be admitted into *Orders*, or to a *Cure of Souls*, though different Methods may have been pursued in different Times, and Places. This method of requiring *Subscription* to known *Articles of Faith* seems to be the least exceptionable of any. If no such *Subscription* were required by publick Authority, every Bishop would doubtless be bound to enquire into the religious Principles of those, who offered themselves for holy Orders, and to reject all such, as he judged to be *unsound in the Faith*. But is it not much for the Ease of the Bishop to have a certain Rule? And is he not hereby freed from the odious, and invidious Task of judging of Men's Faith, and rejecting Candidates arbitrarily, according to his own private Opinion? And with regard to the Candidates, is it not much better to know previously what test of their Orthodoxy will be required of them, than to be subject to the Caprice of one Man, and run the Risk of a refusal, without knowing what Account of their Faith will be de-

manded? And with regard to the Church, a *Test* agreed upon by the whole Body of the Bishops and Clergy is certainly a better and securer Way of keeping false and erroneous Teachers out of the Church, than the leaving the matter to the Discretion of each private Bishop, some of whom might happen themselves to be ignorant, indolent, or unsound in the Faith. One would hope that so easy, so equitable, and so well approved a Method of proving the Faith of Candidates for the Ministry would meet with but little Opposition. But loud has been the Clamour against such *Subscription*, and many are the Objections.

<sup>4</sup> One chief thing objected is, that this *Subscription* interferes with the Rights of private Judgment, and is an Infringement of our Christian Liberty. But whose *Liberty*, or what *Liberty*, is hereby infringed? A *Test* required of Candidates for the Ministry can affect those only who desire such Office. And these are every one still left at *Liberty* to judge for themselves, and think as they please. If they approve not the Doctrines of our *Articles*, they are at *Liberty* whether they will *subscribe* to them, or not. No one compels them to *subscribe*, or assent to these Doctrines. We only refuse to admit into the Ministry those, who in Points, which we judge important, think differently from us. And herein

<sup>4</sup> Confessional, p. 32, 38. Proposals for an Application to Parliament.

the Governors of our Church have as much Right to judge for themselves, as these Objectors have. Each Bishop might, and must have exercised the same Right, if nothing herein had been defined by publick Authority. If any one like not our Terms, he may apply himself to some other Profession, or Busines, and has no reason to complain of any Injury done him.

\* But is not hereby many a conscientious Minister laid under the unhappy Dilemma of either subscribing, or starving? I scarcely know how to give a serious Answer to such Questions—*Ministers*—but we are speaking of those who *desire the Office of a Minister*. And of these not only a pure Conscience is required, but that they hold the Mystery of the Faith. If they are not suffered to enter into the Ministry, are there no other Businesses, or Professions, by which they might get an honest Livelihood? Is there no Bread to be got by any other Means, but only by thrusting themselves into the Ministry? Our Clergy are indeed in general so meanly provided for, and the rich Benefices, and Preserments, confined to so few, that we can scarcely think Men in earnest, who pretend that they are reduced to the Necessity of *starving* by being kept out of the Ministry. Instances of these *starving, conscientious Non-subscribers*, are, I believe, very rare.

\* Confessional, p. 31, 164.

1 Tim. iii. 9.

But

But it is said, that *we are hereby deprived of the Labours of worthy Men.* If by *worthy Men* are meant fit Persons, we must beg leave to deny that those who hold Things contrary to sound *Doctrine*, *are worthy Men.* Such Men may be sincere in their Profession, and of unblameable Life and Conversation. They may be also Men of good Learning and Abilities; but, notwithstanding all these Qualifications, we cannot think them fit to be entrusted with the Ministry of the Gospel, if they *err concerning the Faith.* Nor do I deny that some have had Scruples concerning some of our *Articles*, and have been thereby debarred from serving in the Ministry, who would have done good Service to the Church. But this I will be bold to say, that we have not wanted their Assistance. No Church has produced greater Ornaments of the Christian Profession than the *Church of England* has, in all Ages since its first Establishment to this Day. And for the Proof of this I may appeal to the Annals of our History, and to your own Knowledge and Experience.

\* Another Thing pretended is, that *requiring Subscription to Forms of human Composition is adding to the Rule of Faith.* We do not set up our *Articles* for a *Rule of Faith*, or appeal to them as such: Nor do we prove our Doctrines by our *Articles*, but from *Scripture* only, which we acknowledge to be the *sole Rule of Faith*, by which

\* Confessional, ch. vi.

alone

alone the Truth of all Doctrines, and of our *Articles* themselves, must be tried. Our *Articles* themselves teach, that <sup>b</sup> the Holy Scripture containeth all Things necessary to Salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite, or necessary to Salvation. But though our Church pretends not to be infallible,<sup>1</sup> yet she claims the same Right, as has been claimed, and exercised by all Christian Churches,<sup>k</sup> of taking Care that her Clergy teach no other Doctrine, but what she judges to be true, and agreeable to Scripture, and of requiring of them proper Security that they shall do so. Our *Articles*, though we trust that the Truth of them may be proved by Scripture, are not imposed on any Man, much less on all Men, as *Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation*, but rather as *Articles of Enquiry*, whereby to discover whether those who offer themselves for the Ministry are apt to teach, and hold the true Doctrine of Scripture. Some

<sup>b</sup> Art. vi.      <sup>i</sup> The Necessity of this is acknowledged, and contended for, by *Calvin*, who, in his Epistle to the Protector of England, thus expresses himself — *Claudenda est enim janua curiosis doctrinis. Ratio autem expedita ad eam rem una est; si extet nempe summa quædam doctrinæ ab omnibus recepta, quam inter prædicandum sequantur omnes, ad quam etiam observandam omnes Episcopi et Parochi jurejurando adstringantur, ut nemo ad munus ecclesiasticum admittatur, nisi spondeat illum doctrinæ consensum sibi inviolatum futurum.*

<sup>k</sup> See 1 Tim. i. 3.

such

such Enquiry it would be the Duty of every Bishop to make with regard to all such Candidates, if there were no Form of *Articles* prescribed.

<sup>1</sup> But is not a Declaration that we will teach nothing but what we are persuaded may be concluded, and proved by the Scripture, a sufficient Test of our Orthodoxy? It is such a Test, as would admit into the Ministry Popish Priests, Jesuits, and all the wildest Sectaries; for all these pretend to found their Doctrines on Scripture.

<sup>m</sup> But do we think that new and unscriptural Words will better fix the Sense of Scripture-Doctrine than the Words of Christ, and his Apostles? We acknowledge the Scriptures to be sufficiently clear in all Matters necessary to Salvation. But what if Men wrest these Scriptures, explain away the plainest Texts of Scripture, and pretend to prove the most erroneous and pernicious Doctrines from Scripture? Are such Men to be entrusted with the Ministry of the Gospel, and commissioned to teach these erroneous Doctrines? What then is to be done in this Case? I know of no better way of Security against such Deceivers, than by drawing up Articles explaining such Scriptures as these Men have perverted, and guarding against their Misconstructions. Thus for Instance, the Words of St. John—<sup>n</sup> In the Beginning was the Word, and

<sup>1</sup> Confessional, p. 16, 338.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>n</sup> Joh. i. 1.

*the Word was with God, and the Word was God*—are clear and plain to any common Understanding. But, if Men will evade the Force of such plain Texts by subtle Distinctions, and tell us that *Christ* is only a secondary, and inferior Kind of *God*; a *God by Office only, and not by Nature*; a *God* in the same Sense only, as *Angels*, as *Moses*, and other Men are called *Gods*; as we think such Interpreters of *Scripture* not qualified to be Teachers of the *Gospel*, we judge it necessary to guard against these Evasions. If we are on this Account forced to make Use of new Terms, the Novelty is chargeable, not on us, but on them. And it may be easily shewn,<sup>\*</sup> and indeed has been shewn, that every Article, both of the *Nicene*, and *Athanasian Creed*, which they exclaim so bitterly against, was occasioned by the new and unscriptural Distinctions of subtle Corrupters of the Faith. Nor could we guard against the Errors of *Popery*, and other Sectaries, but by new Words expressly condemning the unscriptural Doctrines, which they had introduced. The very Persons who make this Objection in their Writings, and Discourses, deliver themselves in Words not occurring in *Scripture*, and think they can make the Doctrines of *Scripture* more plain by Words of their own devising. Why then will they not allow the Governors of the Church

<sup>\*</sup> See *Waterland's Critical History of the Athanasian Creed*, Chap. x.

to guard against the Misconstructions of *vain Talkers and Deceivers*, by Words adapted to this Purpose? If this is not allowed, we can (as I said before) have no Fence to prevent *Papish Emissaries*, or any false Teachers whatsoever, from thrusting themselves into the Ministry.

Another common Objection is, that *this Authority*, claimed by our Church to establish *Confessions*, will equally serve to vindicate the *Church of Rome* with regard to her *Impositions*. But the Case is in many Respects widely different. Not to mention that the Doctrines established by the *Church of Rome* are manifestly false, and repugnant to *Scripture*, which we can prove ours not to be; we require those, who are to be entrusted with the Ministry, and Government of our Church, to subscribe to our *Articles*: The *Church of Rome* requires her Additions to the Faith to be believed by all Men, Laity, as well as Clergy, under Penalty of Damnation; and thunders out her Anathemas against all, who will not receive her Decisions on every Point. We disclaim and abhor all Persecution: That *Church* persecutes all who dissent from her, with Fire and Faggot.

Again, that *Church* lays Claim to *Infallibility*, usurps an absolute Authority over Men's Consciences, and denies all Right of private Judgment in Matters of Faith. We pretend not to be *infallible*: We permit and desire all Men to judge for themselves.

themselves. But then the Governors of our Church claim the same Right, which they allow to others, of judging for themselves, and acting accordingly. And in Virtue of this Right they think themselves entitled to judge what Doctrines are fit to be taught in the Church, and what Securities are to be required of those who enter into the Ministry, *that they teach no other Doctrine.*<sup>p</sup> This Power was exercised by all Christian Churches, before the Establishment of *Popery*; and has been claimed by all Protestant Churches since the *Reformation*. One chief End indeed of *Protestant Confessions*, and of our *Articles* in particular, was to be a Fence against *Popery*; and, I humbly apprehend, that we cannot do a Thing more acceptable to the *Romish Church*, or more serviceable to their Cause, than to throw down this Fence.

It is farther said, that *by repealing the Laws requiring Subscription, we shall prevent the evil Consequences of Dissention, and secure the Peace of our Church.* But why should *Subscription* destroy this *Peace*? Why may not Persons of different Persuasions, and Communions, live in *Peace*, and mutual *Charity*? We bear no *Hatred* or *Malice* to those who dissent from us; nor do we desire to persecute or injure them. If they will suffer us to be at *Peace*, we shall not molest them. If they approve not the *Doctrines* of our *Articles*, they need not

<sup>p</sup> See *Bingham Antiq.* B. iv. Ch. 3. l. 2.  
subscribe

subscribe to them. If they dislike the Terms of our Communion, we compel them not to come in : They have a full Toleration to repair to any Conventicle they like best, or to set up one for themselves. Again, would the Repeal of these Laws promote, or restore Peace ? Would Persons of different Persuasions be less zealous in Defence of their respective Tenets, or treat their Opponents with less Severity ? Would our Sectaries, if admitted within the Pale of the Church, be more quiet within Doors, than they are without ? <sup>9</sup> The bitter and virulent Invectives, which have been published against our Church, and against some of its brightest Ornaments, give us little Room to hope for Peace, by Compliance with such Men's clamorous Demands. <sup>10</sup> Nor do we think it would promote either Peace, or Edification, if all Men of all Persuasions were allowed, and commissioned to teach in our Churches whatever Doctrines they pleased. Would not rather every Parish have a System of Divinity peculiar to itself ? And perhaps in the same Church one Doctrine might be preached in the Morning, and another quite different, set forth with equal Authority, in the Afternoon ? And thus that glorious Confusion would soon take Place, which Infidels wish for, and *the Church of Rome* would rejoice to see. And many

<sup>9</sup> See Confessional from Beginning to End.

<sup>10</sup> See Mr. White's Append. to his three Letters, p. 70. well-

well-disposed Persons, not knowing where to find *the Church of England*, would take Refuge in *Po-  
perty*. The Experiment was in great Measure tried last Century; and the Consequence was not *Peace*, but *Strife and Confusion, and every evil Work*. We may well hope that our Governors, both in Church and State, will have more Regard to their own *Peace*, and that of the Publick, than to be willing to repeat the Experiment.

Another Objection is, that *such Forms of Faith will not prevent Diversity of Opinions, but only tempt Men to turn Hypocrites*. If the best Method we can think of to avoid *Diversities of Opinions, and establish Consent touching true Religion*, has through the Perverseness, and Corruption of Mankind, a contrary Effect, surely not we, but these *Hypocrites*, are to blame. But we cannot think it a good Reason for throwing down all the Fences of our *Vineyard*, because some *wild Boars* will sometimes break through them. There is nothing but what may be perverted and abused by *Men of corrupt Minds, destitute of the Truth*. Even the *Gospel of Peace* has given Occasion to Division and Contention. *Oaths* were designed to *put an End to all Strife*; to secure Obedience to the Laws, and Allegiance to the Sovereign: And yet we have too many Instances of Men's swearing to Falshoods; of taking *Oaths of Allegiance*, and immediately breaking out into Rebellion. When this is allowed as a Reason

for requiring no such *Oaths*, then it may be urged as an Argument for abolishing all *Subscriptions*. But if Men will trifle with *Oaths*, and *Subscriptions*, it is their Fault, and not that of the Imposers.

But the loudest Clamour is against such of our *Articles*, as have been thought to favour the Doctrine of *Calvin*. And here we are to combat with Enemies of all Sorts. The Followers of *Arius*, and *Socinus*, make this a Plea for subscribing the *Articles* in their own Sense; and pretend that all, who are not the Disciples of *Calvin*, are guilty of the like Prevarication. And some among ourselves, who pretend indeed to be the only true Members of the *Church of England*, join in the Cry, and accuse all, who are not as rigid *Calvinists* as themselves, of *Equivocation*, and *Hypocrisy*, and of impiously setting their Hands to *Doctrines*, which in their Hearts they never assented to. As these heavy Charges against us may have disturbed the Minds of some well-disposed Persons, it may be proper to look back into the first Occasion and Design of such *Articles*. The Thing, which gave the first Occasion to the *Reformation* begun by *Luther*, was the scandalous Practice of selling *Papal Indulgences*. This gave Rise to Disputes about the Merit of good Works: And this again opened a Door to Con-

\* See *Pietas Oxon.* p. 28, 68.      <sup>1</sup> See *Sleidan*, *Seckendorf*, and other Historians of those Times.

troveries about God's Grace, and Free-Will, and other nice and difficult Points. In these Matters the first *Reformers* differed from one another ; and some of them, and particularly *Luther* himself, were in the Heat of Controversy betrayed into some unguarded, and unwarrantable Expressions. And, what was still worse, others, setting up for *Reformers*, broached many erroneous, and pestilent Doctrines. Some denied the *Divinity of our Blessed Saviour*: Others denied the Necessity of *Good Works*, and held that the *Saints* could not sin ; and under this Pretence broke out into Sedition, and committed the grossest Enormities. The *Papists* made great Advantages of these Differences among *Protestants*. They pretended that, by forsaking the *Catholick Church*, Men were led into endless Disputes ; and they charged the hasty Assertions of particular Writers, or Errors of false Teachers, and wild *Enthusiasts*, upon the *Protestants* in general. " This laid the *Protestants* under a Necessity of vindicating themselves. And to this End they drew up that celebrated *Confession of Faith*, which they presented to the Diet of Augsbourg. In this they had two Views ; first, to acquit themselves of the Scandal of abetting wild and seditious *Enthusiasts*,

" The very same Account of this Affair is given by the Author of the *Confessional*, and he acknowledges this *Necessity*, and thereby effectually confutes himself. See *Confessional*, p. 4. and 5, and Second Letter to the Author, p. 23.

*siasts*, and to declare to all the World what were their real Doctrines : Secondly, to prevent such *Enthusiasts* on the one Hand, and *Popish* Emissaries on the other, from intruding themselves into their Ministry. And herein they proceeded with great Prudence and Moderation. The Disputes, which had arisen on these Points, obliged them in some Sort to declare their Sentiments concerning them. But then they drew up their *Articles* in general and comprehensive Terms. They condemned on the one Hand the *Papists*, who asserted the Merit of *Good Works*, and on the other Hand the *Antinomians*, who denied the Necessity of them. And again they condemned the *Pelagians*, who denied the Necessity of *God's Grace*; and on the other Hand the *Anabaptists*, and others, who denied all *Free-Will*.  
 \* But they so worded their *Articles*, as to compre-

\* It is remarkable that there were the like Disputes about *Predetermination* and *Grace* in the *Romish Church*, before the *Council of Trent*, as have been since among *Protestants*; that these Points were warmly debated in that Council; and that they purposely framed their Decrees in such Manner as to satisfy both Parties; that these Parties continued their Disputes during the sitting of that Council, and each Party claimed the Authority of the Council on their Side; but the Fathers there assembled never thought fit to explain their own Decrees, or decide this Controversy. But these Differences still subsist in that *Church* among those who subscribe to the Decrees of the *Council of Trent*. Though this Procedure may seem rather unaccountable in a Church which claims an infallible

hend all those who thought soberly and moderately on these Points, though they differed from one another in the Manner of explaining them. Our Reformers here in *England*, in *King Edward the Sixth's Time*, went on the same Plan, and acted with the like Prudence, and Moderation. \* They were no Disciples of *Calvin*; but they so drew up their *Articles*, as to include Persons of different Persuasions in these Points. In *Queen Elizabeth's Reign* these *Articles* were reviewed, and received some Alterations, and this is the Form of *Articles* to which we now subscribe. But the Convocation which drew up these *Articles*, though it must be owned that many of the Members of it had then imbibed the Sentiments of *Calvin*, yet observed the same Moderation as their Predecessors had done; nor did they add one single Article in favour of *Calvinism*. The *seventeenth Article*, which treats of *Predestination*, is drawn up without any Mention of *absolute Reprobation*, and tells us, that *we must receive God's Promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture*; which (as the learned Mr.

fallible Power of deciding all Controversies, yet I cannot but applaud their Prudence, and wish they had shewn the like Moderation in other Points. See *F. Paul's Hist. of the Council of Trent*. B. ii. *Heylin's Hist. Quinquart. Controv.* C. 3.

\* See this proved in *Dr. Nowell's Answer to Pietas Oxon.* p. 76, &c.

† *Annals of the Reformation*, Ch. 28. See also *Third Letter to the Author of Confessional*, p. 33, &c. *Dr. Fotbergill's Post-*

*Strype observes*) seems to have been done to prevent any Scruple, which might arise to any Protestant against subscribing the said Articles.<sup>2</sup> And accordingly, when soon after Disputes ran high on these Points, the *Calvinists* attempted to add new *Articles*, and gave this Reason for it, that these Points were not before concluded, and defined by publick Authority.

What then is required of us when we are called upon to subscribe our *Articles*? And in what Sense do we subscribe them? Our *Subscription* is, as I apprehend, a Declaration of our Belief, and Assent to the Truth of the Doctrines contained in the *Articles*; and we are required to subscribe them in the Sense of the Imposers. We are not to subscribe them in our own Sense, or in any Sense which we can possibly put upon the Words; for this would in all other Cases be esteemed downright Prevarication. Nor are we to subscribe them so far only, as they are agreeable to *Scripture*; for this is no *Subscription* at all. This amounts to a Declaration that we think these *Articles* agreeable to *Scripture*, so far only as they are agreeable to *Scripture*, which (<sup>3</sup> as Bishop *Conybeare* justly observes) is as much trifling with common Sense, as with common Honesty. But how are we to know the Sense of the Im-

*script to Sermon on I. xlvi. 24. Bull Apologia pro Harmonia. Waterland's Supplement to Case of Arian Subscription.*

<sup>2</sup> See *Strype's Life of Whitgift*, App. B. iv. N°. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Sermon on Tim. vi. 3, 4. p. 25.

sers? I suppose it may in most Cases be judged of from the plain, usual, and literal Signification of the Words used. Where the Words of the *Article* are plain, and determinate, there can be no Doubt of its Meaning. Where Doctrines are expressly asserted, or Errors expressly condemned, those who disbelieve the Doctrines so asserted, or hold the Errors so condemned, cannot honestly subscribe. No *Papist* can conscientiously subscribe to our *Articles*: Most of the peculiar Tenets of *Papery*, the Doctrine of the *Infallibility of the Church*, the *Merit of Good Works*, *Purgatory*, *Transubstantiation*, the *Worship of Images and Relicks*, and *Invocation of Saints*, are therein expressly condemned. No *Socinian*, or *Arian*, can honestly subscribe an *Article* which asserts, that *in the Unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one Substance, Power, and Eternity*. No one, who denies the Necessity of *Divine Grace*, can subscribe to the *Tenth Article*; nor can any one, who denies the Necessity of *Good Works*, subscribe to the *Twelfth*. <sup>b</sup> But then there are several *Articles* purposely worded in general Terms. To these, Persons who agree in the general Doctrine there delivered, may honestly subscribe, though they are of different Persuasions in the Explication of this general Doctrine. And in

<sup>b</sup> See Dr. *Waterland's Case of Arian Subscription*, p. 40. Second Letter to the Author of the *Confessional*, p. 136, &c. p. 160, &c. Dr. *Nowell's Answer to Pietas Oxon.* p. 119, &c.

this Case we are to enquire, to what general Doctrine the Imposers designed to require our Assent, not what were their private Opinions with regard to the particular Explications of it. There is a plain Instance of this in the 23d Article, which teaches, that *it is not lawful for any Man to take upon him the Office of publick Preaching, or ministering the Sacra- ments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same.* And those we ought to judge lawfully called, and sent, which be chosen, and called to this Work, by Men who have publick Authority given to them in the Congregation to call, and send Ministers into the Lord's Vineyard. Who those are is not here determined. The Compilers were not willing to condemn, or unchurch the reformed Churches abroad; and therefore prudently avoided determining the Question whether *Episcopal Ordination* is necessary. Those who hold, and those who deny, the Necessity of *Episcopal Ordination*, may both subscribe to this Article: Those only are condemned by it, who hold that a Man may preach without any lawful Vocation. A like Instance of Moderation is plainly to be seen in the 28th Article.  
\* They purposely avoided defining the Manner of *Christ's Presence in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. Nay, they struck out Part of an Article among those drawn up in King Edward the Sixth's Time, which seemed to deny all *corporal Presence*, and to which

\* Bp Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, Vol. II. B. 3. p. 405. therefore

therefore the Lutherans might scruple *subscribing*, and contented themselves with condemning those only, who held the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, or affirmed that *the Body of Christ was eaten after a carnal Manner*. The like Caution they have observed in those *Articles* relating to *Predestination*, *Free Will*, &c. They worded them in general Terms, that Persons who were of different Persuasions in several Particulars relating to them, might yet subscribe, as agreeing in the general Doctrine there delivered. They went, as a *Calvinistical* Writer (*Bishop Hall*) observes, a Mid-way between both, guarding against the Extremities on each Side; on one Hand condemning the *Papists*, who ascribed a *Merit to Good Works*, and on the other the *Antinomians*, who denied the Necessity of them. Whenever therefore we *subscribe* to these *Articles*, we do not *subscribe* in contrary, or different Senses. We all *subscribe* to the same general Sense, though in explaining the Particulars relating to it, we use that Liberty of Judgment, which the Church hath purposely left to us.

However, if the Oppugners of our *Articles* would be content with expunging these *Articles*, we might, if by this means Peace might be obtained, be possibly willing to comply with them. There may perhaps be less Occasion for such *Articles* now, than there was in those Times. But this is not all they contend for. They inveigh against all *Subscriptions*

scriptions in general: Nay, we must part with our <sup>a</sup> Liturgy too, and our Creeds. The principal Thing indeed, which seems to be aimed at by most of these Reformers, is the Doctrine of the Trinity, so plainly taught, both in our Articles, and our Liturgy. This has been always, from the very Beginning of Christianity, thought an essential Article of Faith; and, if any come unto us, and bring not this Doctrine, we may and ought to shut our Gates against him. I cannot indeed but wonder how Men of this Persuasion should expect, or desire to be included in Communion with those who believe our Blessed Saviour's Divinity. If we believe Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to be really and truly God, we ought in our publick Prayers to ascribe to them the Titles, the Honour, the Worship due to God; If we do not believe this, we cannot, I think, pay them such Honours without Idolatry. How then can there be any Communion between Persons of Sentiments so diametrically opposite? How can

<sup>a</sup> One Argument used against Subscription to the Liturgy is, that such Requisition of Subscription must eventually preclude all Improvement in a Liturgy; which is confuted by Fact, there having been at different Times several Additions, and Improvements made in our Liturgy. By our Subscription we only declare that the Book of Common Prayer, &c. containeth nothing in it contrary to the Word of God, and that it may lawfully be used, and that we ourselves will use it. And what is there herein which should forbid, or prevent the Governors of our Church from making Improvements in our Liturgy?

they

they join in Worship, who have not the same Object of Worship? Far be it from me to desire to persecute them, or injure them in the least, in their Persons, or Possessions; but surely we may exclude them from our *Communion*, and much more from our *Ministry*, without any Breach of Charity. But neither, if this Point were given up, will they be contented. No, they declare against all *Subscriptions*, except only to the Truth of the Holy Scriptures, which would let in (as I observed before) not only *Arians*, but *Papists*, and all the wildest *Sectaries*. They protest against all *Impositions*, and such they call all *human Ordinances*; but without something of this Kind there could be neither Establishment, nor Church, nor indeed any publick Worship.

If any of us then should think that some Things in our *Articles*, or *Liturgy*, might be amended, (as no human Compositions can be free from all Imperfections) yet let us take Care how we listen to the plausible Suggestions of those, who under the Pretence of the Reformation of our Church, strike at the very Foundation of it. And this especially at this Time, when a Spirit of Licentiousnes seems to be prevailing, and a Contempt of all Government, which threatens the Subversion of our happy Constitution, both in Church and State. But I have already detained you too long, and therefore shall conclude with exhorting you all to "hold fast the

\* Tit. i. 9.

*faithful*

*faithful Word, as you have been taught ;<sup>f</sup> and avoid them which cause Divisions, and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned. Let no Man deceive you with vain Words : Give no Assistance, Countenance, or Encouragement to these Innovators, who under the Pretence of Reformation would privily bring in damnable Heresies.<sup>g</sup> Fear God, and honour the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.*

<sup>f</sup> Rom. xvi. 17.

<sup>g</sup> Prov. xxiv. 21.

1 Pet. ii. 17.

T W O

DISSERTATIONS

O N

PSALMS XXII. AND XLII.



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# DISSERTATION

ON

P S A L M   XXII.

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THE twenty-second *Psalm* contains a most full and clear Prophecy of our *Blessed Saviour's* Passion, and the Propagation of his *Gospel*; but seems to have somewhat suffered by the injury of Time. It is entitled a *Psalm of David*; and I doubt not but that the greatest Part of it related primarily to *David* himself. It contains a most pathetick and poetical Description of his own Sufferings, and Calamities; but expressed in such Figures, as were most literally fulfilled in the Sufferings of *Christ*. I am sensible that some Writers have been unwilling to admit these secondary Senses of Prophecies. They are apprehensive that this would render the Prophecies uncertain, and ambiguous, like some of the Heathen Oracles, which bear Senses applicable to any Event, which might happen. And it must be owned

owned that some *Christian* Writers have carried this Matter too far; have indulged too freely a wanton Imagination, and found out Allegories, and Mysteries, in almost every Sentence, and Word of *Scripture*. But we may proceed in a middle Way. We are not at Liberty to put what figurative Sense we please on Scripture; and ought not to fix a double Sense upon any Prophecy, unless where the Authority of Scripture, or Evidence of the Thing, will justify us. Nor do we put arbitrary Interpretations on Prophecies, or suppose them to signify contrary, or incoherent Events, but such only as are consistent with and subordinate to one another. What we would say is, that <sup>a</sup> the whole Ceremonial Law carried with it a Shadow, and Figure of good Things to come. And not only this, but Events in those Days frequently prefigured future Events in the Times of the *Gospel*. The Delivery of the People of *Egypt* prefigured our Redemption by *Christ*. The *Babylonish* Captivity represented the future Dispersion of the *Jews*, and the Destruction of *Jerusalem* the future Judgment at the last Day. Hence it comes to pass that the *Prophets*, foretelling Events shortly to happen, express themselves in Terms more properly, and literally applicable to those other more remote Events, of which the former were a Type. <sup>b</sup> Thus our *Saviour* in his Prophecy of the

<sup>a</sup> Heb. ix. 9. x. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxiv.

Destruction

Destruction of *Jerusalem* uses figurative Expressions, which plainly relate to the Day of Judgment. Persons also living under the Law were Types of *Christ*. *David* in particular must be acknowledged so to be: *Christ* is peculiarly entitled the Son of *David*, and is by the Prophets called *David*—<sup>c</sup> *They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raije up unto them*—faith *Jeremiah*. <sup>d</sup> *I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my Servant David*—faith *God* by *Ezekiel*. <sup>e</sup> *Afterward shall the Children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and shall fear the Lord, and his Goodness in the latter Days*—faith *Hosea*. In all which, and other like Passages of Scripture, by *David* is certainly to be understood our *Blessed Saviour*. There can be therefore no Impropriety in applying what *David* says of his own Sufferings, and Calamities, to those of our *Lord*. Figures, we know, are usual in all Kinds of Poetry. But it is the peculiar Beauty, and Excellency of the *Scripture Poetry*, that its very Figures are propheticall, and are literally applicable to Things to come under the *Gospel*. Of this we have a most striking Instance in the *Psalms* before us. When *David* was describing his own Sufferings, the Spirit of *God* suggested to him such Expressions, as could not be literally applicable to himself, but point out

<sup>c</sup> *Jer. xxx. 9.*<sup>d</sup> *Ezek. xxxiv. 23.*

K k

<sup>e</sup> *Hos. iii. 5.*

expressly

expressly the Sufferings of *Christ*. When he says—<sup>f</sup> *They pierced my Hands, and my Feet*—he could only mean, if we suppose him to speak of himself alone, that his Calamities were as grievous to him as the exquisite Pains caused by piercing those tender Parts. But this was most literally fulfilled in *Christ*, <sup>g</sup> who was nailed to the Cross, and after his Resurrection bore in his Body the Prints of the Nails, <sup>h</sup> and said to his Disciples—*Bebold my Hands and my Feet.* Thus again, when David says—<sup>i</sup> *They part my Garments among them, and cast lots upon my Vesture*—this was so far true of himself, that his Enemies spoiled his Goods, and rifled his Substance. <sup>k</sup> But it is particularly remarkable, that at our *Saviour's* Crucifixion, the Soldiers divided his Garment among them, and his Coat being without Seam, they would not rend it, but cast lots for it; and thus, as the *Evangelists* themselves tell us, this *Scripture* was fulfilled. Such exact Agreement in these minute Circumstances could not well happen casually; but carries with it a striking Proof of the Interposition of *God*, and a strong Confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel.

I would farther observe, that in this Kind of Prophecies, which relate to two Events, the Prophets often, after using figurative Expressions ap-

<sup>f</sup> V. 16.

<sup>g</sup> Joh. xx. 25. &c.

<sup>h</sup> Luk. xxiv. 39.

<sup>i</sup> V. 18.

<sup>j</sup> Job. xix. 23, 24. Matt. xxvii. 35.

plicable

plicable to both, leave that which they had first in View, and more plainly, and peculiarly point out the latter Days. This is easily discernible in that remarkable Prophecy of *Isaiab* delivered in his seventh and following Chapters. Thus also our *Saviour*, after he had foretold the Destruction of *Jerusalem* in Terms applicable also to the Day of Judgment, in the 24th Chapter of St. *Matthew's* Gospel, in the next Chapter more particularly describes the Proceedings of that great Day. And thus also shall we find it in the Psalm before us, as we shall hereafter see.

But it may be proper first to take a short, and cursory View of the whole *Psalm*. It appears to have been penned on the first breaking out of *Ab-salom's* Rebellion, when *David* was in the greatest Distress, threatened with sudden Destruction by his beloved Son, compassed and beset round by his Enemies, and forsaken by those he thought his best Friends, and at the same Time lying under the Pressure of a grievous Sicknes<sup>1</sup>, as appears by many of his Psalms. In this distressful Condition he breaks out into this passionate Exclamatio<sup>n</sup>—<sup>m</sup> *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* <sup>n</sup> Our *Saviour* used these very Words, when ready to expire on the Cross, thereby teaching, and authorizing us to apply what is here

<sup>1</sup> See Psalm vi, xxxviii, xxxix, xli.    <sup>m</sup> V. 1.    <sup>n</sup> Matt. xxvii. 46.

said of David to himself. ° The Psalmist goes on — *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the Words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the Day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the Night-season, and am not Silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the Praises of Israel. Our Fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.* A lively Image we have here of David's deep Distress, but in words, which will equally suit our Saviour's Agonies in the Garden, and on the Cross, when, ♦ *being in an Agony, he prayed most earnestly,* ♪ *and his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.* To proceed with the Psalmist — ' *But I am a Worm, and no Man, a Reproach of Men, and despised of the People. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the Lip, they shake the Head, saying, He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.* As this was really the Case of David, so was it more strongly verified in our Saviour. His sufferings bore in many respects no small Resemblance to those of this good King. \* *He was despised, and rejected of Men,* betrayed by one of his Disciples, denied by another, and forsaken by all. He was persecuted by the Chief Priests, and Elders; the People cried out aloud

° V. 1, &amp;c.

♦ Luke xxii. 44.

¶ Matt. xxvi. 38.

\* V. 6, &amp;c.

\* Is. liii. 3.

—Crucify him, crucify him—the Soldiers mocked him, they that passed by reviled him, wagging their Heads; the Thieves also, which were crucified with him, or one of them at least, railed on him. And (what is most particularly remarkable) the Chief Priests, and Elders derided him in the very Words of the Psalmist—<sup>1</sup> *He trusted in God, let him deliver him,* “if he delighteth in him. I need not enlarge on the following Words—<sup>2</sup> *But thou art he that took me out of the Womb; thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my Mother's Breasts. I was cast upon thee from the Womb; thou art my God from my Mother's Belly. Be not far from me, for Trouble is near; for there is none to help.* These Complaints are equally suitable to our Saviour's Case, and so is the most beautiful Description of David's Enemies, which immediately follows—

<sup>3</sup> *Many Bulls have compassed me; strong Bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their Mouths, as a ravening, and a roaring Lion.* In the next Verses David, who seems to have been then visited with a grievous Sickness, describes his own Condition in the finest Strains of Poetry—<sup>4</sup> *I am poured out like Water, and all my Bones are out of joint; my Heart is like Wax, it is melted in the midst of my Bowels. My Strength is dried up like a Potsherd, and my Tongue cleaveth to my*

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *in g̃d̃s̃ d̃ṽt̃s̃.*

<sup>3</sup> V. 9, &c.

<sup>4</sup> V. 12, &c.

<sup>5</sup> V. 14, &c.

*Jaws, and thou hast brought me into the Dust of Death.*  
*For Dogs have compassed me, the Assembly of the Wicked*  
*had inclosed me.* Thus <sup>z</sup> the sweet Psalmist of  
*Israel;* and as this Imagery suits also the Son of  
*David,* so what follows exhibits a lively Picture  
*of a Person stripped of his Clothes, extended on*  
*the Cross, and gazed on by the Multitude—*  
<sup>a</sup> *They pierced my Hands, and my Feet. I may tell all*  
*my Bones; they look, and stare upon me.* And this,  
*and the following Verse—*<sup>b</sup> *They part my Garments*  
*among them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture—* David  
*(as has been already observed) spoke of himself*  
*in Figure, and Metaphor; but it was most truly,*  
*and literally, fulfilled in our Lord's Crucifixion.*  
*The Psalmist goes on to offer up most earnest*  
*Prayers to God for Deliverance—*<sup>c</sup> *But be not thou*  
*far from me, O Lord: O my Strength, haste thee to*  
*help me. Deliver my Soul from the Sword, my Dar-*  
*ling from the Power of the Dog. Save me from the*  
*Lion's Mouth.* And the Faith of this good King  
*was as exemplary as his Piety. God seems to have*  
*inspired him with a comfortable Assurance that*  
*his Prayers were heard—*<sup>d</sup> *For thou hast heard me*  
*(says he) from the Horns of the Unicorns.* The sud-  
*den Transition is here observable—**Save me (says*  
*he) from the Lion's Mouth; yea thou hast heard me*  
*from among the Horns of the fierce Beasts.* <sup>e</sup> While

<sup>x</sup> 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. <sup>a</sup> V. 16, 17. <sup>b</sup> V. 18. <sup>c</sup> V. 19, &c.

<sup>d</sup> V. 21, &c. <sup>e</sup> Comp. Is. lxv. 24. Dan. ix. 20.

he was yet praying he was assured that his Prayer was heard ; and a joyful Confidence succeeded instantly to deep Distress. The like may be observed in some other Psalms. The good King therefore goes on in full Assurance of Faith—I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren ; in the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him ; all ye the Seed of Jacob glorify him ; and fear him all ye the Seed of Israel. For he hath not despised, nor abhorred the Affliction of the afflicted ; neither hath he hid his Face from him ; but, when he cried unto him, he heard. My Praise shall be of thee in the great Congregation : I will pay my Vows before them that fear him. The Meek shall eat, and be satisfied ; they shall praise the Lord, that seek him ; your Heart<sup>f</sup> shall live for ever—This confident and pious Address to God needs no farther Comment.

I shall only observe that this Part also of the Prophecy, though more immediately fulfilled in David, is applicable also to Christ, \* who offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying, and Tears, and was heard. And being delivered from Death, and raised again from the Grave, he taught all that fear the Lord to praise him.

It has been already observed, that the Prophets, speaking of two different Events, often quit the Subject, which they had more immediately in

<sup>f</sup> Or as the ancient Versions render it—their Hear.—<sup>a</sup> d so also MS. 76. Bibl. Kennicott.      \* Heb. v. 7.

View, and deliver themselves in Terms applicable only to the Times of the *Gospel*. Thus also *David*, having in the foregoing Verses foretold his own Deliverance, now, moved by the Spirit of *God*, launches out into distant Futurity. What follows is a direct Prophecy of the Coming of *Christ*, and the Call of the Gentiles, and is no way applicable to *David* himself—<sup>b</sup> *All the Ends of the World shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the Kindreds of the Nations shall worship before thee. For the Kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the Nations.* No such Thing happened in *David's Time*. The Gentiles did not turn to the *Lord*; nor did all the Nations worship before him. Nor was *David* ever Governor among the Nations. His Dominion extended no farther than *Palestine*, and *Syria*, and the adjacent Countries; and over these his Conquests were compleated before the penning of this *Psalm*. But this was most compleatly fulfilled in the Son of *David*, <sup>i</sup>*the Root of Jesse, who should rise to reign over the Gentiles;* <sup>k</sup>*whom God gave for a Light to the Gentiles, to be his Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth.* <sup>j</sup>*To him hath God given the Throne of his Father David;* <sup>m</sup>*to him hath he given Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him.*

<sup>b</sup> V. 27, 28. <sup>i</sup> If. xi. 10. Rom. xv. 10. <sup>k</sup> If. xlix. 6.

<sup>j</sup> Luke i. 32. <sup>m</sup> Dan. vii. 14.

What

What follows is more difficult. Our Translation runs thus—*All they that be fat upon Earth shall eat, and worship; all they that go down to the Dust shall bow before him; and none can keep alive his own Soul. A Seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation. They shall come, and shall declare his Righteousness unto a People that shall be born, that he hath done this.* It is not easy to make Sense of these Words, either as they stand in our Translation, or in the Hebrew Text. Let us see then whether we cannot find some Remedy from the ancient Versions. The 29th Verse runs thus—**אכלו וישתחו כל-דשנִי ארֶץ לפנֵי יכְרֻעַו—כָל-יְרוּדִי עֲפָר**—And here the *Septuagint* makes a full Stop. This seems to refer to what went before V. 25, 26. David having foretold his Deliverance from his Enemies, says there, that he should offer his Praises in the great Congregation, and pay his Vows, and call the Meek, or rather the Poor to eat of them. Here he foretells that in the latter Days all should partake of the *Christian* Sacrifices. By—**דִשְׁנִי ארֶץ**—*the Fat of the Earth*—we may understand *the Rich*, "as *Iсаiah* foretells, that *Kings should come to the Brightness of his Rising*; or perhaps the Expression may signify in general all who live of the Fruits of the Earth. The Sense is much the same either way. In the latter Days all, both Rich and Poor, should

• If. ix. 3.

join

join in the Christian Worship, and Service; and all they that go down into the Dust, all Mortals, should bow down themselves before the Lord. In what follows we read in the Hebrew—**ונפשו לא חיה**—of which I can make no Sense, and again in the next Verse—**זורע יעבדנו**—But the Septuagint renders it—**Καὶ ἡ οὐρανὸς μου ἀντῷ ζῆ· καὶ τὸ σπέρμα μου δουλεύσει ἀντῷ**—It is plain that for **ונפשו**—they read **לן**—for **לא**—**ונפשי**—**לן**—with an Aleph—with a Vau, and again for **זורע**—**זרע**—These Variations are but small, and give us a very good Sense—*My Soul shall live, and my Posterity shall serve God.* And with the Septuagint also all the other old Versions agree, the Vulgate, the Syriack, the Arabick, and the Ethiopick.<sup>°</sup> In what follows I would again with the ancient Versions in the last Verse for **יבאו**—read **יבא**—and join it to the preceding Verse, and I would render the whole thus—*It, that is, my Seed, shall be reckoned to the Lord in the Generation which shall come. And they shall declare his Righteousness to a People, which shall be born; for he, the Lord hath done it, or, as the Septuagint renders it, which the Lord hath made.* The words thus read, and translated, carry with them an excellent Sense, agree with what goes before, and are a plain Prophecy of the Pro-

<sup>°</sup> The Targum agrees neither with the Original, nor any of the Versions, and makes no Sense at all of the Words.

agation of the *Gospel*, and Calling of the Gentiles. In those Days, when the Kingdom should be the *Lord's*, all People should be called to the Knowledge of the true Religion ; <sup>¶</sup> and all Mortals should bow down at the Name of *Jesus*, and confess that he is the *Lord Jehovah*. As *David* should be delivered from his Calamities, and his Soul should live, so should his Seed also serve *God*. Out of his Loins should spring he <sup>¶</sup> who should be *for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the Gentiles*. The true *Israelites* should become the *Lord's* People in the Generation to come ; and they should declare his Power among the Heathen. A new People also should be born unto *God*; '*other Sheep, which were not of this Fold, should be bring, and they should bear his Voice, and become one Fold under one Shepherd*'. Thus I have, as I hope, by the Help of the ancient Versions, been able to clear up the remarkable Prophecy contained in this *Psalm*. The former Part of it under the Person of *David* plainly points out the Sufferings of *Christ*; in the 21st and following Verses the Psalmist foretells his own Deliverance from his Enemies; the latter Part of the *Psalm* from the 27th Verse is a Prophecy of the Coming of *Christ*, and the Calling of the Gentiles.

<sup>¶</sup> Phil. ii. 10, 11.

<sup>¶</sup> If. xlvi. 6.

<sup>¶</sup> Joh. x. 16.

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# DISSERTATION

ON

P S A L M    XLII.

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WE find it to be no small Help to the Understanding of ancient Writings, if we can discover the Time when, and the Occasion on which they were penned. And for want of such Knowledge, many Passages in such Writings are become obscure and unintelligible. The same may be observed in the Books of the *Old Testament*, and particularly in this Book of *Psalms*. To some of these is prefixed an Account of the Occasion on which they were written ; and by comparing these with one another, and with the sacred History, great Light may be, and has been thrown on the more difficult Passages, and both the Meaning, and the Beauty, and Energy of several Expressions set in a clearer Point of View. We have no such Information in the Title of this *Psalms* ; but, by looking into the Account

count of *David's* Troubles, recorded in the second Book of *Samuel*, we may, I think, discover the Occasion on which, nay perhaps the very Night when it was composed. <sup>a</sup> We may, I apprehend, collect from many of the *Psalms*, that *David* was visited with a severe, and dangerous Sickness; and that *Absalom*, during his weak State, took Advantage to raise a Rebellion against him. <sup>b</sup> We learn from the sacred History, that this wicked Design was carried on with the greatest Art, and Secresy. The Conspiracy was strong; the People encreased continually with *Absalom*; and *Abitbophel*, one of *David's* chief Ministers, an able Counsellor, and crafty Politician, had joined *Absalom*, and conducted his Counsels. The News of this Revolt surprised *David*, and found him unprepared, and unable to make Resistance. He found himself obliged to quit his Palace, and, what he regretted much more, the Temple of God, and to flee suddenly from *Jerusalem*, with only a few faithful Attendants. The good King was now in the deepest Distress, in a weak State of Body, and an unnatural Rebellion was raised against him by his own Son, his beloved Son *Absalom*: He was deserted by *Abitbophel*, his Counsellor, whom he esteemed; <sup>c</sup> his familiar Friend, whom he trusted, who was now become his bitter and most formidable Enemy: He

<sup>a</sup> See Psal. vi, xxii, xxxviii, xxxix, xli.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. xv.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. xli. 9. lv. 13, &c.

knew

knew not whom to trust : *The Hearts of the Men of Israel were after Absalom* : The Revolt seemed general, and the Danger great and imminent.

<sup>a</sup> *His Heart was sore pained within him ; and the Terrors of Death were fallen upon him. Fearfulness and Trembling came upon him ; and Horror overwhelmed him.* He was obliged to hasten his Escape, and make Speed to depart. And he, and the People that was with him, went up from *Jerusalem* with their Heads covered, and barefoot, weeping as they went up. In this calamitous State his only Resource was in his *God* ; and *God* did not forsake him. When he was told that *Abitophel* was among the Conspirators, he prayed to *God* to turn the Counsel of *Abitophel* into Foolishness ; and *God* instantly heard his Request. Behold *Hushai* the *Archite* came to meet him ; and by him *David* found Means to defeat the Counsel of this crafty Politician. <sup>c</sup> *Abitophel advised Absalom to pursue immediately that Night after David, while he was weary, and weak-handed.* But *Hushai's* Counsel was to wait till he could gather all *Israel* together : And this Counsel was approved of by *Absalom*, and his People. And *Hushai* acquainted *David* with their Resolution, and advised him to make no Delay, but pass over *Jordan* immediately. This Advice he followed ; and came to that River by Night. It was now Summer-time ; <sup>f</sup> and *Jor-*

<sup>a</sup> Psal. iv. 5.      \* 2 Sam. xvii. 1, &c.      <sup>f</sup> See Josh. iii. 15. 1 Chron. xii. 15. Jer. xii. 5. Eccles xxiv. 26.  
dan

*dan* overflowed its Banks. The Passage was difficult, and dangerous; but the Danger of Delay was still greater. At this very Time I suppose that *David* composed the *Psalm* before us; and we shall find all Parts of it answer exactly.

The first Thing that here offered itself to his Observation was the Thirstiness of the Harts, who in the Day-time sheltered themselves in the Woods from the Heat of the Sun, and came down in the Evening to the River to slake their Thirst. To this he compares his own Condition, his eager Desires of worshipping *God* in his holy Temple, and the Grief and Uneasiness, which he felt on being bereft of that Comfort—*My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come, and appear before God?* Amidst all his Distresses, nothing afflicted him so much as the being driven, and excluded from the Place of *God's* publick Worship. He poured out his Soul in Tears and Lamentations, when he remembered the Days in which he went with the Multitude into the House of *God*, with the Voice of Joy, and Praise. And greatly was he affected by the Discredit done to Religion by his Sufferings, which gave these impious Rebels Occasion to cast a Reproach upon Providence itself, which either would not, or could not protect so zealous a Servant of *God*. This pierced him like a Sword to the very Bones, while his Enemies reproached him, and also *God himself*; while they said daily unto him—

*Where*

*Where is now thy God?* But yet in this deep Distress he did not give himself up to Despondency, or Despair. His Piety, and Confidence in God, supported him in all his Dangers and Difficulties. He breaks out into this fervent Exclamation—  
*Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I will yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance.* Our Psalmist proceeds in the same pious Strain—*O my God, my Soul is cast down within me; but I will remember thee from the Land of Jordan*—*וּחֲרֵמִים מִהָר מַצְעָר*—and of the Hermonites from the Hill Mitzr. Hermon was a Ridge of Mountains at the very farthest Extremity of the Land of Israel, covered most Part of the Year with Snow. The Word—*מַצְעָר*—signifies little. It might be the Name of some Hill beyond Jordan, or possibly some little Hill now in View. Whatever Hill is here meant, the general Sense is plain—I will remember thee, whatever Dangers surround me, and wheresoever I am driven. I will remember thee amidst the Overflowings of Jordan. I will remember thee, if I should be driven to the farthest Extremity of the Land, and forced to take Refuge in the bleak Mountains of Hermon. Which shall we admire most, the Beauty of the Poetry, or the Piety of the Sentiment? But to go on. Another Thing, which struck David on this Occasion, was the Noise of the Water, and Waves, sounding in his

his Ears—*Deep calleth unto Deep at the Noise of thy Water-Spouts.* Torrents of Water poured down on each Side of him; those below seemed to answer to those above. Or perhaps the Water-Spouts may signify the Clouds of Heaven, which poured down, and encreased the Flood, and added to the Noise. A dreadful sound this must be to *David* in his dangerous Condition, at the dead of Night. And by this Comparison he sets forth his own Calamities in the most beautiful Strains of divine Poetry—*All thy Waves and thy Billows are gone over me.* But his Hope in *God* did not fail him by Day, or by Night. *The Lord* (says he) will command his loving Kindness in the Day-time; and in the Night his Song shall be with me, and my Prayer unto the God of my Life. And after a short and humble Expostulation with *God*, who suffered him to be thus oppressed, he breaks out again into the like pious Ejaculation. And so also in the Close of the next *Psalm*, which seems to be a Continuance of this, he concludes with the same. This is throughout the Burthen of his Song—*Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.*

Nor did the Event deceive this pious King's Expectation. By the Morning Light he and all his

\* 2 Sam xvii. 22, &c.

Attendants got safe over *Jordan*; there lacked not one of them. Here he was placed out of the Reach of those who sought his Life. The Country flock'd in to him: The good *Barzillai*, and other loyal Subjects, brought in Provisions, and other Necessaries, for the Sustenance of his weary, and weak-handed Followers: *Joab*, and his Men of War, came to his Assistance: And he was soon able to raise an army powerful enough to engage, and overcome his Rebel Son.

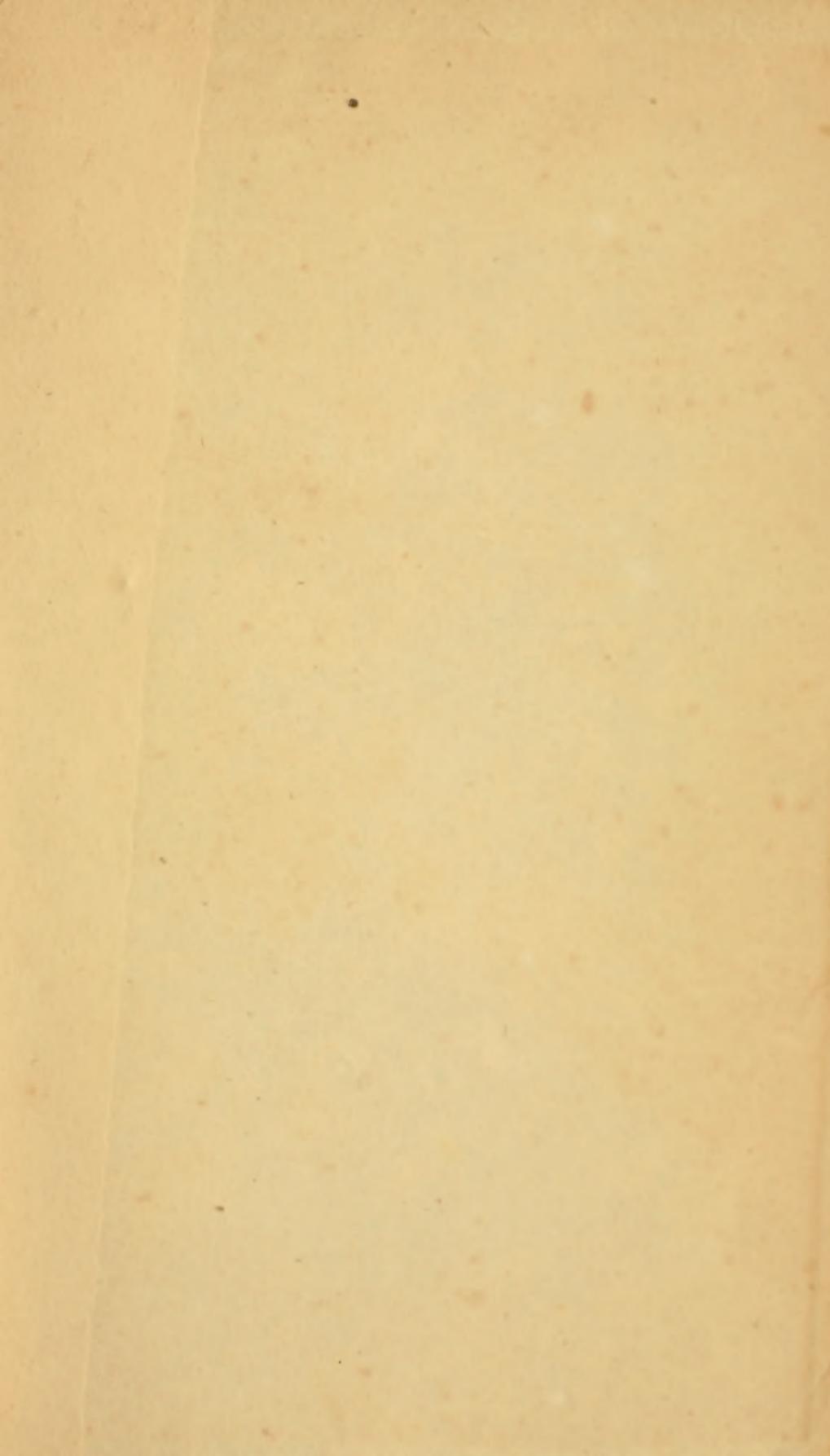
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